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SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM ART HANDBOOKS.

EDITED BY WILLIAM MASKELL.

Nº. 2.—IVORIES ANCIENT AND MEDIÆVAL.



*These Handbooks are reprints of the dissertations prefixed to the large catalogues of the chief divisions of works of art in the Museum at South Kensington; arranged and so far abridged as to bring each into a portable shape. The Lords of the Committee of Council on Education having determined on the publication of them, the editor trusts that they will meet the purpose intended; namely, to be useful, not alone for the collections at South Kensington, but for other collections by enabling the public at a trifling cost to understand something of the history and character of the subjects treated of.*

*The authorities referred to in each book are given in the large catalogues; where will also be found detailed descriptions of the very numerous examples in the South Kensington Museum.*

*August, 1875.*

W. M.







PASTORAL STAFF CARVED IVORY WITH FIGURES COMPOSING TOGETHER A  
REPRESENTATION OF THE NATIVITY GERMAN 12<sup>TH</sup> CENT. 3 x 11 (M218-63)  
J. A. WAGGONER F.C.T.

IVORIES  
ANCIENT AND MEDIÆVAL.

BY  
WILLIAM MASKELL.

WITH NUMEROUS WOODCUTS.



*Published for the Committee of Council on Education*

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ILLUSTRATIONS.



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# IVORIES

## ANCIENT AND MEDIÆVAL.

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### CHAPTER I.

EVERY description or account of Carvings in Ivory ought to include similar carvings in bone, of which last many remarkable examples are to be found in the South Kensington and other museums. The rarity and value of ivory frequently obliged workmen to use the commoner and less costly material.

In the strictest sense, no substance except the tusk of the elephant presents the characteristic of true ivory, which, "now, according to the best anatomists and physiologists, is restricted to that modification of dentine or tooth substance which, in transverse sections or fractures, shows lines of different colours or striæ proceeding in the arc of a circle, and forming by their decussations minute curvilinear lozenge-shaped spaces." Upon this subject the reader should consult a valuable paper, read by professor Owen, before the Society of Arts, in 1856, and printed in their journal.

But, besides the elephant, other animals furnish what may also be not improperly called ivory. Such as the walrus, the

narwhal, and the hippopotamus. The employment of walrus ivory has ceased among southern European nations for a long time; and carvings in the tusks of that animal are chiefly to be found among remains of the mediæval and Carlovingian periods. In those ages it was largely used by nations of Scandinavian origin and in England and Germany. The people of the north were then unable to obtain and may not even have heard of the existence of true elephant ivory. In quality and beauty of appearance walrus ivory scarcely yields to that of the elephant.

Sir Frederick Madden tells us, in a communication published in the *Archæologia*, that "in the reign of Alfred, about A.D. 890, Ohtere, the Norwegian, visited England, and gave an account to the king of his voyage in pursuit of these animals, chiefly on account of their teeth. The author of the *Kongs-Skugg-sio*, or *Speculum Regale* (composed in the 12th century), takes particular notice of the walrus and of its teeth. Olaus Magnus, in the 15th century, tells us that sword-handles were made from them; and, somewhat later, Olaus Wormius writes, 'the Icelanders are accustomed, during the long nights of winter, to cut out various articles from these teeth. This is more particularly the case in regard to chess-men.'" Olaus Wormius speaks in another place of rings against the cramp, handles of swords, javelins, and knives.

There is still another kind of real ivory—the fossil ivory—which is now extensively used in many countries, although it may be difficult to decide whether it was known to the ancients or to mediæval carvers. In prehistoric ages a true elephant, says professor Owen, "roamed in countless herds over the temperate and northern parts of Europe, Asia, and America." This was the mammoth, the extinct *Elephas primigenius*. The tusks of these animals are found in great quantities in the frozen soil of Siberia, along the banks of the larger rivers. Almost the whole of the ivory turner's work in Russia is from Siberian fossil ivory, and the story of the entire mammoth discovered about half a



century ago embedded in ice is well known to every one. Although commonly called *fossil*, this ivory has not undergone the change usually understood in connection with the term fossil, for their substance is as well adapted for use as the ivory procured from living species.

With regard to the tusks of elephants, African and Asiatic ivory must be distinguished. The first, "when recently cut, is of a mellow, warm, transparent tint, with scarcely any appearance of grain, in which state it is called *transparent* or *green* ivory ; but, as the oil dries up by exposure to the air, it becomes lighter in colour. Asiatic ivory, when newly cut, appears more like the African, which has been long exposed to the air, and tends to become yellow by exposure. The African variety has usually a closer texture, works harder, and takes a better polish than the Asiatic." It would be mere guessing to attempt to decide the original nature of ancient or mediæval ivories. Time has equally hardened and changed the colour of both kinds, whether African or Asiatic.

We cannot easily suggest any way in which the very large slabs or plaques of ivory used by the early and mediæval artists were obtained. The leaves of a diptych of the seventh century, in the public library at Paris, are fifteen inches in length by nearly six inches wide. In the British museum is a single piece which measures in length sixteen inches and a quarter by more than five inches and a half in width, and in depth more than half an inch. By some it is thought that the ancients knew a method, which has been lost, of bending, softening, and flattening solid pieces of ivory ; others suppose that they were then able to procure larger tusks than can be got from the degenerate animal of our own day. Mr. McCulloch, in his dictionary of commerce, tells us that 60 lbs. is the average weight of an elephant's tusk ; but Holtzapffel, a practical authority, declares this to be far too high, and that 15 or 16 lbs. would be nearer the average. Be this as it may, pieces of the size above mentioned (and larger specimens probably



exist) could not be cut from the biggest of the tusks preserved in the South Kensington museum; although it weighs 90 lbs., is eight feet eleven inches long, and sixteen inches and a half in circumference at the centre. This tusk is the largest of five which were presented to the Queen by the king of Shoa about the year 1856, and given by Her Majesty to the museum. The other four weigh, respectively, 76 lbs., 86 lbs., 72 lbs., and 52 lbs. They are all, probably, male tusks. An enormous pair of tusks, weighing together 325 lbs., was shown in the Great Exhibition of 1851; but these, heavy as they were, measured only eight feet six inches in length, and did not exceed twenty-two inches in circumference at the base.

An ingenious mode of explaining how the great chryselephantine statues of Phidias and other Greek sculptors were made, is proposed and fully explained in detail by Quatremère De Quincy in his work on the art of antique sculpture. He gives several plates in illustration, more particularly Plate XXIX.; but none of them meet the difficulty of the large flat plaques. The natural form of a tusk would adapt itself easily, so far as regards the application of pieces of very considerable size, to the round parts of the human figure.

Mr. Hendrie, in his notes to the third book of the "*Schedula diversarum artium*" of Theophilus, says that the ancients had a method of softening and bending ivory by immersion in different solutions of salts in acid. "Eraclius has a chapter on this. Take sulphate of potass, fossil salt, and vitriol; these are ground with very sharp vinegar in a brass mortar. Into this mixture the ivory is placed for three days and nights. This being done, you will hollow out a piece of wood as you please. The ivory being thus placed in the hollow you direct it, and will bend it to your will." The same writer gives another recipe from the Sloane manuscript (of 15th century), no. 416. This directs that the ingredients above mentioned "are to be distilled in equal parts, which would yield muriatic acid, with the presence of water. Infused in this

water half a day, ivory can be made so soft that it can be cut like wax. And when you wish it hardened, place it in white vinegar and it becomes hard."

Sir Digby Wyatt, in a lecture read before the Arundel society, quotes these methods from Mr. Hendrie and adds another from an English manuscript of the 12th century: "Place the ivory in the following mixture. Take two parts of quick lime, one part of pounded tile, one part of oil, and one part of torn tow. Mix up all these with a lye made of elm bark." These various recipes have been tried in modern days, and the experiments, hitherto, have completely failed.

Considerable variety of colour will be observed in the various pieces of any large collection, and much difference in the condition of them. Some, far from being the most ancient, are greatly discoloured and brittle in appearance; others retain their colour almost in its original purity and their perfect firmness of texture, seemingly unaffected by the long lapse of time. The innumerable possible accidents to which carved ivories may have been exposed from age to age will account for this great difference, and a happy forgetfulness, perhaps owing to a contemptuous neglect at first of their value and importance, may have been the cause of the comparatively excellent state and condition of many. Laid aside in treasuries of churches and monasteries, or put away in the chests and cupboards of great houses, the memory even of their existence may have passed away for century after century.

It does not appear that any good method is known by which a discoloured ivory can be bleached. All rough usage of course merely injures the piece itself, and removes the external surface. Exposure to the light keeps the original whiteness longer, and in a few instances may to some extent restore it. It need hardly be observed that any other attempt to alter the existing condition, whatever it may be, as regards the colour of an antique or mediæval ivory is to be condemned.

It is quite a different matter to endeavour to preserve works in



ivory which have suffered partial decomposition, and which can be kept from utter destruction only by some kind of artificial treatment. Almost all the fragments sent to England by Mr. Layard from Nineveh were in this state of extreme fragility and decay. Professor Owen suggested that they should be boiled in a solution of gelatine. The experiment was tried and found to be sufficiently effectual; and it is to be hoped that the present success will prove to be lasting. "Since the fragments have been in England," says Mr. Layard, "they have been admirably restored and cleaned. The glutinous matter, by which the particles forming the ivory are kept together, had, from the decay of centuries, been completely exhausted. By an ingenious process it has been restored, and the ornaments, which on their discovery fell to pieces almost upon mere exposure to the air, have regained the appearance and consistency of recent ivory, and may be handled without risk of injury."

We may think it to be sufficiently strange in tracing the early history of the art of carving or engraving in ivory, that we should be able easily to carry it, upon the evidence of extant examples, to an antiquity long before the Christian era: through the Roman, Greek, Assyrian, and Jewish people, up to an age anterior to the origin of those nations by centuries, the number of which it may be difficult accurately to count. These very ancient examples are of the earliest Egyptian dynasties: yet, between them and the date of the earliest now known specimens of works of art incised or carved in ivory there is a lapse of time so great that it may probably be numbered by thousands of years:

We must go back to prehistoric man for the proof of this; to a period earlier than the age of iron or of bronze; to the first—the drift—period of the stone age. We must go back, as Sir John Lubbock writes, "to a time so remote that the reindeer was abundant in the south of France, and probably even the mammoth had not entirely disappeared." Lartet and Christy also (in their valuable publication, the *Reliquiæ Aquitanicæ*)



make a like remark: "It rests with the geologist, by indicating the changes which have occurred in the very land itself, to shadow out the period in the dim distance of that far antiquity when these implements, the undoubted work of human hands, were used and left there by primæval man."

Within the last few years, in caves at Le Moustier and at La Madelaine in the Dordogne, numerous fragments have been found of tusks of the mammoth and of reindeer's bone and horn, on some of which are incised drawings of various animals, and upon others similar representations carved in low relief. These objects have been engraved in several works by geologists and writers upon the important questions relating to prehistoric people; and copies of them may be found in Sir John Lubbock's book, "*The origin of Civilization*," already quoted from. Among them are drawings and carvings of fish, of a snake, of an ibex, of a man carrying a spear, of a mammoth, of horses' heads, and of a group of reindeer.

Sir John Lubbock describes these works as showing "really considerable skill;" as "being very fair drawings;" as the productions of men to whom we must give "full credit for their love of art, such as it was." But to speak of them in words so cold is less than justice. No one can examine the few fragments which as yet have been discovered without acknowledging their merit, and attributing them to what may very truly be called the hand of an artist. There can be no mistake for a moment as to many of the beasts which are represented.

Again: the sculptor has given us, in a spirited and natural manner, more than one characteristic quality of his subject: and we can recognise the heaviness and sluggishness of the mammoth as easily as the grace and activity of the reindeer. The results of the workman's labour are not like the elephants and camels and lions of a child's Noah's ark—merely bodies with heads and four legs—but they are executed with the right feeling and in an artistic spirit: the animals are carefully drawn, and often with

much vigour. There is nothing conventional about them ; they are far beyond and utterly different in style from the ugly attempts of really civilised people, such as the Peruvians or Mexicans, to say nothing of the works of the savages of Africa or New Zealand. They are true to nature.

The aboriginal nations of North and South America must certainly be spoken of as civilised, though it is curious to remember how great authorities seem to differ as to what civilisation means. Macaulay, in his *Life of lord Clive*, writing with a recklessness of statement not unusual with him when aiming at some picturesque contrast, describes the ancient Mexicans as "savages who had no letters, who were ignorant of the use of metals, who had not broken in a single animal to labour, and who wielded no better weapons than those which could be made out of sticks, flints, and fish-bones, and who regarded a horse-soldier as a monster." But Bernal Diaz, whose report as an eye-witness has stood the test of years of later investigation and dispute, describes the appearance of the great cities from without as like the enchanted castles of romance, and full of great towers and temples. And within, "every kind of eatable, every form of dress, medicines, perfumes, unguents, furniture, lead, copper, gold, and silver ornaments wrought in the form of fruit, adorned the porticoes and allured the passer-by. Paper, that great material of civilisation, was to be obtained in this wonderful emporium ; also every kind of earthenware, cotton of all colours in skeins, &c. There were officers who went continually about the market-place, watching what was sold, and the measures which were used."

If we are to take the judgment of Lord Macaulay as our guide in determining what may be true civilisation, we must set down the Greeks in the reign of Alexander, or the Italians in the days of Leo the tenth, as "savages," because they were ignorant of the electric telegraph ; or ourselves now, because we cannot guide balloons through the air.

The sculptures and works of art in the ruined cities of Yucatan



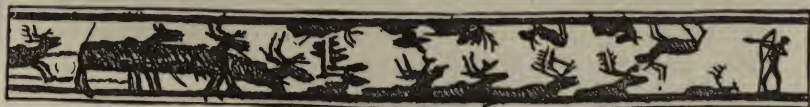
are also to be thought of. Many engravings of them are given in Stephens's central America.

Nor is it enough to say that the prehistoric carvings are merely true to nature. Their merit is clearly seen when compared with the plates of Indian drawings and picture writings in Schoolcraft's history of the Indian tribes of the United States: or again, of a different character altogether, the illuminations in Indian and Persian manuscripts. In some respects these last are of the highest quality as regards execution, but the animals are generally drawn in a manner purely conventional, with scant feeling of truth or beauty, and little power of expressing it.

In short, the prehistoric carvings are from the hands of men who were neither beginners nor blunderers in their art. The practised



skill of a modern wood engraver would scarcely exceed in firmness and decision, nor in evident rapidity of execution, the outline of the animals in the example which is here engraved.



Other illustrations are given in order that the reader may compare them, and more especially those also just referred to



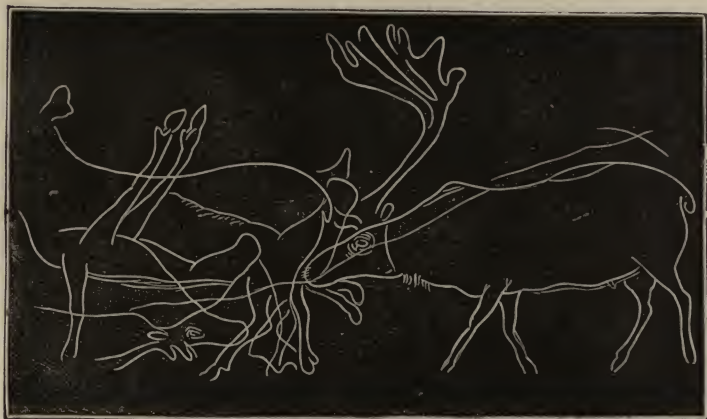
above, with a woodcut (on preceding page) of drawings incised upon bone by Esquimaux of our own days. This has been chosen because there seems to be a general disposition, in the way of theory, to compare the dwellers in the caves of Dordogne and the men of the stone age with the Esquimaux, and to limit, as it were, the unknown amount of civilisation in the one by what we have learnt from our own experience of the latter. Yet, so far as the drawings and the sculptures are concerned, there is scarcely room for comparison. The work of the stone age is that of a people with whom, if they were in all other respects savages, we have no modern parallel. The work of the Esquimaux is that of men who imitate with the hand of a child, and the success or power of whose imitation ranges exactly with their advance and culture (if culture it may be called) in other arts.



The first of these illustrations is perhaps the best, as it is certainly the most delicate and graceful of all the fragments yet discovered. It represents the profile of the head and shoulder of an ibex, carved in low relief upon a piece of the palm of a reindeer's antler. So exact and well characterised is the sculpture, that naturalists have no hesitation in deciding the animal to be an ibex of the Alps, and not of the Pyrenees.

The next is a group of reindeer drawn upon a piece of slate.

And lower down the page, incised upon a piece of mammoth ivory, are outlines of the mammoth itself. The original, rather



more than nine inches in length, is at Paris in the museum of the Jardin des plantes.



There is no discovery with respect to primæval man—his powers and capabilities, his possible enjoyments and appreciation



of the beautiful, his certain infinite elevation as a reasonable being above the beasts of the field, in the most distant age and period to which his existence has been traced,—so full of interest, so full as yet of unfathomed mystery, as these wonderful works in ivory and bone. It can scarcely be supposed that, by a happy accident, we have lighted on the only specimens which were ever executed of such great merit; or that there were some two or three men only who for a brief time in the stone age, by a sort of miracle, were able to produce work so excellent. Further researches and a few more fortunate “finds” may enable us to learn much more than we now know of other habits, and the state of (what we call) the barbarism of those ancient races in other respects. Nor must we forget that for numberless generations after these men had passed away their descendants lost all the old power and skill. “Dark ages” came, similar (although incomparably longer in duration) to those which followed Greek or Roman civilisation and science from the sixth to the ninth and tenth centuries after Christ. Again quoting Sir John Lubbock, we know that “no representation, however rude, of any animal has yet been found in any of the Danish shell mounds. Even on objects of the bronze age they are so rare that it is doubtful whether a single well-authenticated instance could be produced.” “Even curved lines” upon the rude and coarse pieces of pottery of later ages “are rare.” Once more: “Very few indeed of the British sepulchral urns, belonging to ante-Roman times, have upon them any curved lines. Representations of animals are also almost entirely wanting.”

Further discussion and speculation upon this subject would here be out of place. We must leave it, although with great regret. We must pass at one bound to a later period of time which, however long ago it may seem to us looking back upon it, is nevertheless, in comparison with the supposed date of the men who left their ivory and bone carvings in the caves of Aquitaine, positively modern.



## CHAPTER II.

ALTHOUGH the narrative of the sacred Scriptures does not, with the exception of the first eleven chapters of Genesis, reach back so far as the known history of the kingdom of Egypt, it may be best to mention, first, some places in the Old Testament in which reference is made to works in ivory.

King Solomon, we are told, "made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold." "The ivory house which Ahab made," is particularly mentioned among his memorable acts. The Psalmist speaks of garments brought "out of ivory palaces," or from what may rather be translated wardrobes. The original text is *מִדְּהֵיכָל שֵׁן*. In the earlier Hebrew the word *הֵיכָל* meant a small house or palace; in the later,—and the 45th Psalm is not of early date, and was moreover written in a foreign country,—it meant more commonly a wardrobe, or what we now call a vestry or sacristy. The prophets Ezekiel and Amos tell us of "benches of ivory brought out of the isles of Chittim," of "horns of ivory," and of "beds of ivory." There are other evidences in the Bible of the value and high estimation in which ivory was held by the Jews; and its beauty of appearance, its brightness, and smoothness are used as poetical illustrations in the Song of Solomon. From a verse in the fifth chapter of this last book we also learn that the ivory was sometimes inlaid with precious stones.

It is quite evident that in those days works in ivory were regarded in Judæa as a possession only to be acquired by very

great and wealthy persons ; nor may it be too much, perhaps, to say that they were looked upon as insignia of royalty. We may entirely agree with De Quincy, in his book upon the statue of Jupiter at Olympia : " L'ivoire constitua les ornements distinctifs de la dignité royale chez les plus anciens peuples. L'antiquité ne parle que de sceptres et de trônes d'ivoire. Tels étaient selon Denis d'Halicarnasse les attributs de la royauté chez les Étrusques. A leur exemple, Tarquin eut le trône et le sceptre d'ivoire, &c."

But, as has been already observed, there are specimens and remains of Egyptian works in ivory still existing which date by many centuries from an earlier time than the days of Solomon or Ahab. These must be, of course, of excessive rarity : partly because of their antiquity and fragile nature ; partly because of the smallness of their size, owing to which they must have been frequently overlooked or thrown aside. The collection in the British museum includes some examples, a few of which, particularly two daggers inlaid and ornamented with ivory, are of the time of Moses, about 1,800 years before Christ. Several chairs, ornamented in a like manner, may be attributed to the sixteenth century B.C. Some woodcuts are given of chairs and stools ornamented with ivory, in Sir Gardner Wilkinson's account of the ancient Egyptians.

Among the Egyptian antiquities in the British museum may also be mentioned the handle of a mirror in hippopotamus ivory ; an ivory palette of about the same period ; two ivory boxes, in the shape of water fowl ; and a very remarkable figure or statuette, a woman, of perhaps the eleventh century B.C. ; and, again, a very curious casket of considerable size but of much later date ; probably of the first century of the Christian æra : Roman work and decoration. This was found at Memphis, and is made of ivory plaques laid upon a framework of wood. The plaques are incised with figures and coloured. The shape is oblong, with a sloping cover ; it measures about twelve by ten inches.



The use of ivory for ornament and the adapting it to works of art must have been known by the Egyptians from a most remote antiquity. There is a small ivory box in the Louvre, which is inscribed with a prænomen attributed to the fifth dynasty. Labarte, quoting De Rougé, mentions another of the sixth dynasty:—"On voit au musée Égyptien du Louvre une quantité d'objets d'os et d'ivoire. Ce sont de petits vases, des objets de toilette, des cuillers dont le manche est formé par une femme nue, et une boîte ornée d'une belle tête de gazelle. La pièce la plus curieuse est une autre boîte d'ivoire très-simple, mais d'une excessive antiquité, puisqu'elle porte la légende royale de Merien-ra, qui est placé vers la sixième dynastie." Dr. Birch in a paper printed among the transactions of the Royal society, on two Egyptian cartouches found at Nimroud, refers to a tablet of the twelfth dynasty, which describes a figure whose "arms are to be made of precious stones, silver and gold, and the two hinder parts of ivory and ebony. In a tomb at Thebes record is made of a statue composed of ebony and ivory, with a collar of gold."

The date of the Egyptian statuette in the British museum and of numerous smaller objects in that and in the great foreign collections, such as spoons, bracelets, collars, boxes, &c., most of which are earlier than the twenty-fourth dynasty and long before the time of Cambyses, brings us to about the same period as the famous Assyrian ivories, which were found at Nineveh, and which are also preserved in the British museum.

These were chiefly discovered in the north-west palace; and almost all in two chambers of that building. We cannot do better than listen to the general description of them given by Mr. Layard himself:—"The most interesting are the remains of two small tablets, one nearly entire, the other much injured. Upon them are represented two sitting figures, holding in one hand the Egyptian sceptre or symbol of power. Between them is a cartouche containing hieroglyphics, and surmounted by a plume, such as is found in monuments of the eighteenth and subsequent



dynasties of Egypt. The chairs on which the figures are seated, the robes of the figures themselves, the hieroglyphics and the feather above, were enamelled with a blue substance let into the ivory, and the whole ground of the tablet, as well as the cartouche and part of the figures, was originally gilded,—remains of the gold leaf still adhering to them. The forms and style of art have a purely Egyptian character, although there are certain peculiarities in the execution and mode of treatment that would seem to mark the work of a foreign, perhaps an Assyrian, artist. The same peculiarities, the same anomalies, characterise all the other objects discovered. Several small heads in frames, supported by pillars or pedestals, most elegant in design and elaborate in execution, show not only a considerable acquaintance with art, but an intimate knowledge of the method of working in ivory. Scattered about were fragments of winged sphinxes, the head of a lion of singular beauty, human heads, legs and feet, bulls, flowers, and scroll work. In all these specimens the spirit of the design and the delicacy of the workmanship are equally to be admired."

There are altogether more than fifty of these Assyrian ivories in the British museum: a detailed account of nearly all is given by Mr. Layard in the appendix to his first volume. Dr. Birch says they cannot be later in date than the seventh century B.C.; and thinks it highly probable that they are much earlier. Mr. Layard believes that about the year 950 B.C. is the most probable period of their execution.

There can be no doubt that from the year 1000 B.C. down to the Christian æra there was a constant succession of artists in ivory in the western Asiatic countries, in Egypt, in Greece, and in Italy. Long before ivory was applied in Greece to the making of bas-reliefs and statues it was employed for a multitude of objects of luxury and ornament. Inferior to marble in whiteness, and of course greatly inferior in extent of available surface, ivory exceeds marble in beauty of polish and is less fragile, being an animal substance and of true tissue and growth. From the time of Hesiod

and Homer numerous allusions are to be found in classic authors to various works in this material: such as the decoration of shields, couches, and articles of domestic use. As to statues, Pausanias tells us that, so far as he could learn, men first made them of wood only; of ebony, cypress, cedar, or oak. The passages from the earlier classics have been referred to, over and over again, by all the later writers on the subject; and it would be not merely wearying but unnecessary to repeat them here.

In the sixth century before Christ, ivory statues of the Dioscuri and other deities were made at Sicyon and Argos. Sir Digby Wyatt, in the lecture before referred to, speaks of them as having been rude in character, but there is no evidence left for so disparaging a decision. Other works were statues of the Hours, of Themis, and of Diana. The names of some of the sculptors have been preserved: among them Polycletus, Endoos of Athens, the brothers Medon, and Dorycleides.

The style in which objects of this kind were executed was called *Toreutic*: from *τορεύω*, to bore through, to chase, to work in relief; signifying chiefly working the material in the round or in relief. Winckelman, in his history of art, explains the term at first with insufficient exactness: "Phidias inventa cet art appelé par les anciens *toreutique*, c'est à dire, l'art de tourner." In his second edition he corrects this, and rightly says, "la racine de cette dénomination est *τορός*, *clair*, *distinct*, épithète qui s'applique à la voix. C'est pourquoi on donne ce nomme au travaux en relief, par opposition au travail en creux des pierres précieuses." A long disquisition on the meaning of the word, and its etymology, is given by De Quincy.

One of the most famous of such *toreutic* works, and of which Pausanias has left us a tolerably accurate description, was the coffer which the Cypselidæ sent as an offering to Olympia, about 600 B.C. It seems to have been made of cedar wood, of considerable size; the figures ranged in five rows, one above the other, along the sides which were inlaid with gold and ivory.



The subjects were taken from old heroic stories. De Quincy has given a large plate with a conjectural restoration of the chest; which he supposes to have been oblong with a rounded cover. Others believe it to have been elliptical.

Pausanias, in his description of Greece, mentions the existence in his time of numerous ivory statues and of chryselephantine works. In the first section of the seventeenth chapter of the fifth book he enumerates ten or fifteen, which he says were all made of ivory and gold; and a table of ivory. At Megara he saw an ivory statue of Venus, the work of Praxiteles; at Corinth, many chryselephantine statues; near Mycenæ, a statue of Hebe, the work of Naucydes; in Altis, the horn of Amalthea; and in another treasury there, a statue of Endymion entirely of ivory, except his robe; at Elis, a statue made of ivory and gold, the work of Phidias; near Tritia, in Achaïas, an ivory throne with the sitting figure of a virgin; at Ægira, a wooden statue of Minerva of which the face, hands, and feet were ivory. And, to name no more, a statue of Minerva, the work of Endius, all of ivory, long preserved at Tegea, but at the time when he wrote placed at the entrance of the new forum at Rome, having been taken there by Augustus.

There are two men whose travels and the sights they saw we cannot but envy; one was Pausanias, the other our own Leland.

It should be observed that Pausanias believed ivory to be the horn and not the tooth of the elephant: and he has a long argument about it in his fifth book, where he refers to and mentions the Celtic stag. Declaring it to be horn, he says that, like the horns of oxen, ivory can be softened by fire and changed from a round to a flat shape.

The famous chryselephantine statues of Phidias and his contemporaries were somewhat later than the statues of the Dioscuri and the chest at Olympia. One of the most celebrated was the figure of Minerva in the Parthenon, which was in height nearly forty English feet. It would be wrong to omit all notice of the



attempt to reproduce this statue which was made by order of the late Duc de Luynes, and was shown in the Paris Exhibition of 1855. "M. Simart, qui l'a exécutée, s'est montré le digne interprète de Phidias, et a su retrouver, par ses études approfondies, le vrai sentiment de l'art antique. La statue, de trois mètres de hauteur, est d'ivoire et d'argent : la face, le cou, le bras et les pieds, la tête de Méduse placée sur son egide, ainsi que le torse de la Victoire qu'elle tient dans la main droite, sont d'ivoire de l'Inde. La lance, le bouclier, le casque, et le serpent sont de bronze ; la tunique et l'égide d'argent ont été repoussées et ciselées."

Even more colossal than the figure of Minerva was the Jupiter at Olympia ; the god was represented sitting, and reached to the height of about fifty-eight feet. De Quincy has some conjectural restorations of this statue engraved in his book.

We remember the destruction of these and similar works with the utmost regret ; and the more so, because that destruction was owing in many instances to the mad violence of Christian fanatics ; the iconoclasts of the eighth century. The remains which we possess even of smaller objects are not only of excessive rarity, but they cannot with any certainty be attributed to artists working in Greece itself. Ivory and metal have perished under conditions which have left uninjured fragile vases. There are some examples of carvings in ivory in the British museum, and especially in the collection lately purchased from signor Castellani which have been found in Etruscan tombs. Many of these are perhaps the work of Greek artists.

Etruscan sculpture was probably derived at first from Egypt : but the art of the one was entirely and unchangingly conventional, and never seems to vary from a certain fixed style. The Etrurian, on the contrary, soon cleared itself from the bondage of old traditions and, even when rudest, was free and attempted to imitate nature in the representation of muscles, hair, and draperies.

Neither the beauty nor the wonderful spirit of the execution of some of the ivories in the British museum has been exceeded or perhaps equalled in any later time. Among them the following ought to be particularly mentioned :—

A large bust of a woman, of the Roman republican period, and a small carving of the head of a horse, scarcely inferior to the work of any Greek artist of the best time. A very important head of a Gorgon, as seen on Athenian coins, with eyes inlaid in gold, about two inches in diameter; probably the button of a woman's dress. Two lions, the heads and part only of the bodies, lying across each other, very admirable and full of character; and another lion's head, the top perhaps of the handle of a mirror. These were chiefly discovered, with numerous other fragments, at Chiusi and Calvi. At Chiusi also were found the panels of two small caskets which have been put together; both are of early date; one it may be of the fourth century B.C. and Phœnician in style. There is also in the same case a fine small ivory statuette, much later, perhaps of the second century: a boy, still partly embedded in the mortar or refuse in which it was found.

The workers in ivory during the first centuries of our æra were, as a class, sufficiently numerous to be exempted by law from some personal and municipal obligations. Pancirolus, in his "*Notitiæ*," gives a list of these bodies of artificers. He mentions as exempt, architects, medical men, painters, and others, with references to the various laws under which they were excused; and among them are "workmen in ivory, who make chairs, beds, and other things of that sort."

Nevertheless, carvings in ivory of the Roman imperial times before Constantine are extremely scarce. In the superb collection in the South Kensington museum there are two only which can safely be so attributed. One is the fragment, no. 299; the other is the beautiful leaf, no. 212.

The British museum (not to mention a large number of



fragments chiefly of caskets or decorations of furniture, tesseræ and tickets of admission to theatres and shows, dice, and the like) possesses a few pieces, of which one is extremely fine in character and in good preservation. The subject is Bellerophon, who is represented on Pegasus, killing the Chimæra; and it is executed in open work. The age is somewhat doubtful. Professor Westwood places it as early as the third century, and his judgment must be treated with great deference. Others, of no slight authority, are indisposed to give it an earlier date than the fourth century. This admirable ivory has somewhat of the character of the book-cover in the Barberini collection, engraved by Gori, in the second volume of his great work on diptychs. That famous piece is not perfect, nor is there any name upon it. Gori fairly argues that it represents the emperor Constantius, about the year 357. The Bellerophon is of finer work.

The gradual and uninterrupted decline of art from the days of Augustus is to be traced as distinctly in the ivories which have been preserved as in ancient buildings. But we can scarcely agree with D'Agincourt as regards its rapidity. Speaking of sculpture generally, he says: "On vit celle-ci successivement grande, noble, auguste sous le prince qui mérita ce nom; licencieuse et obscène sous Tibère; grossièrement adulatrice sous Caracalla; extravagante sous Néron, qui faisait dorer les chefs-d'œuvre de Lysippe." D'Agincourt probably refers to the barbarism of Caligula, who proposed to put a head of himself upon the Olympic Zeus by Phidias; or to Claudius, who cut the head of Alexander out of a picture by Apelles, to replace it with his own. Suetonius has recorded the first of these atrocities (can we speak of them by a lighter name?) and Pliny the last.

In the collection given to the town of Liverpool by Mr. Mayer there are two very celebrated pieces, possibly of the third century; they were originally the leaves of a diptych. On one is Æsculapius, on the other Hygieia.

### CHAPTER III.

FROM the middle of the fourth century down to the end of the sixteenth we have an unbroken chain of examples still existing. Individual pieces may, perhaps, in many instances be of questionable origin as regards the country of the artist, and, sometimes, with respect to the exact date within fifty or even a hundred years. But there is no doubt whatever that, increasing in number as they come nearer to the middle ages, we can refer to carved ivories of every century preserved in museums in England and abroad. Their importance with reference to the history of art cannot be overrated. There is no such continuous chain in manuscripts, or mosaics, or gems, or textiles, or porcelain, or enamels. Perhaps, with the exception of manuscripts, there never was in any of these classes so large a number executed nor the demand for them so great. The material itself or the decorations by which other works were surrounded very probably tempted people to destroy them; and we may thank the valueless character of many a piece of carved ivory, except as a work of art, for its preservation to our own days.

The most important ivories before the seventh century are the consular diptychs. The earliest which still exists claims to be of the middle of the third century, the latest belongs to the middle of the sixth. Anything doubled, or doubly folded, is a diptych: *δίπτυχον*; but the term was chiefly applied to the tablets used for writing on with metallic or ivory styles by the ancients. When



these tablets had three leaves they were called triptychs, and of five or more leaves pentaptychs or polyptychs. Inside, each leaf was slightly sunk with a narrow raised margin in order to hold wax; outside, they were ornamented with carvings. They were not always of ivory; frequently of citron or of some less costly wood, and for common use were probably of small size, convenient for the hand and for carrying about.

Homer, in the sixth book of the *Iliad*, speaks of such tablets, and there are frequent references to them in Latin writers; in Juvenal, Martial, and other authors. Many passages are to be found quoted in books upon the ancient Roman diptychs. It happens also that two ancient specimens have been found. Both were discovered in gold mines in Transylvania, and have been described by Massmann in a volume published at Leipsic in 1841. Each consists of three leaves, one of fir-wood, the other of beech, and about the size of a modern octavo book. The outer part exhibits the plain surface of the wood, the inner part is covered with wax surrounded by a margin. The edges of one side are pierced that they might be fastened together by means of a thread or wire passed through them. The wax is not thick on either set of tablets; it is thinner on the beechen set, in which the stylus of the writer has in places cut through the wax into the wood. There is manuscript still remaining on both of them: the beginning of the beechen tablets containing some Greek letters. The writing on the other is in Latin, a copy of a document relating to a collegium. The name of one of the consuls is given, determining the date to be A.D. 169. An abridged account of these very curious tablets is given in Smith's "Dictionary of antiquities" under the word "*tabulæ*."

The consular diptychs were of much larger size than those made for everyday use: generally about twelve inches in length by five or six in breadth. Diptychs of this kind were part of the presents sent by new consuls on their appointment to very eminent persons; to the senators, to governors of provinces, and

to friends. Each consul probably sent many such gifts, and duplicates of more than one example have been preserved. These naturally varied greatly, not only in the workmanship but in the material. For persons in high station or authority the diptychs would be carved by the best artists of the time, and if not made entirely of some metal very costly and valuable the material would be ivory, perhaps also mounted in gold. As we find in the fifth book of the letters of Symmachus (consul, A.D. 391), "*Domino principi nostro auro circumdatum diptychon misi, cæteros quoque amicos eburneis pugillaribus et canistellis argenteis honoravi.*" For others of lower rank or for dependents, they would be roughly finished and of bone or wood.

It is to the custom of sending these diptychs to people of rank in the provinces that we owe the preservation of some still extant, and which have been kept in the country into which they came by gift or otherwise in very early times. Generally, in somewhat later days, they were given or bequeathed to churches; and, having been first used in the public services, were afterwards laid by in their treasuries.

Inside these official diptychs the wax may have been inscribed with the *Fasti Consulares* or list of names of all preceding consuls, closing with that of the new magistrate, the donor. As Ausonius, himself consul in the year 379, says in one of his epigrams:

"Hactenus adscripsi fastos. Si sors volet, ultra  
Adjiciam : si non, qui legis, adjicies.  
Scire cupis, qui sim? titulum qui quartus ab imo est  
Quære ; legis nomen consulis Ausonii."

This, however, as a rule, is matter of conjecture. Outside, the leaves were carved with various ornaments; sometimes with scrolls, or cornucopiæ, or the bust of the new consul in a medallion. Sometimes—and as the diptychs which we now possess repeat this style the most frequently we may conclude it to have been the usual practice at least for the more important of



those presented—the consul was represented at full length and sitting in the cushioned curule chair: one hand often being uplifted and holding the *mappa circensis*. He is clothed in the full ceremonial vestments of his office, as used when he was inducted into it. The dress itself seems to be a splendid imitation of that worn by the old generals at the celebration of a triumph; a richly embroidered cloak (*toga picta*) with ample folds, beneath which is a tunic striped with purple (*trabea*) or figured with palm leaves (*tunica palmata*). On his feet are shoes of cloth of gold (*calcei aurati*), and in one hand the consular staff or sceptre (*scipio*) surmounted by an eagle or an image of Victory.

The conspicuous representation of a cushion on the seat of the chair is probably not to be overlooked as of small signification or importance. Cushions were permitted only to certain privileged classes during the games of the circus; and Caligula conceded the use of cushions to senators as a graceful compliment at the beginning of his reign.

Some will remember also the advice given by Ovid, in his "Art of Love," to the lover in attendance on his mistress in the theatre or at public games (he had just before been speaking of the ivory statues carried in the procession):

"Parva leves capiunt animos. Fuit utile multis  
Pulvinum facili composuisse manu.  
Profuit et tenui ventum movisse tabella [*flabello*?];  
Et cava sub teneram scamna dedisse pedem."

Not unusually in the lower part of each leaf, in a separate compartment, were representations of the shows which the consul intended to give, of the manumission of slaves, and of the presents, money, bread, &c., which were also to be distributed among the people.

The series of consular diptychs, having each of them in many cases a known date, is of essential value and importance in the history of art, whilst the fashion of them lasted. Similar as they are one to another in certain respects, nevertheless there is a

considerable variety of treatment and undoubtedly various degrees of excellence or inferiority of style and execution. When so many would be required by the consul of the year, it was impossible that all could be made by good artists, and probably one or two of the best kind were roughly copied by common workmen. It was sufficient if the general character, dress, or special ornament of the consul were represented.

Rapidly as art declined during the three centuries after the birth of Constantine, as shown especially in these consular diptychs, we may nevertheless trace a certain grandeur in the figures and in the attitudes which show that earlier and better models of antiquity were still followed by the sculptors. Labarte further observes that the diptychs carved at Constantinople were far superior to those which were made in Italy.

Many of these diptychs are identified by the name of the consul which is carved across the top of one leaf; the full legend generally running across both being equally divided. It has been said that these legends (as well as portions of the sculpture) were sometimes coloured red. We know no extant example, but the following passage from Claudian is important, and not on that particular point alone :

"Tum virides pardos, et cetera colligit austri  
Prodigia, immanesque simul Latonia dentes,  
Qui secti ferro in tabulas auroque micantes,  
Inscripti rutilum cælato consule nomen,  
Per proceres et vulgus eant ; stupor omnibus Indis  
Plurimus ereptis elephas inglorius errat  
Dentibus."

We usually find also a profusion of proper names, according to the fashion and taste of the court of Constantinople and of the last years of the consulate. Following these names was a formula which expressed the style and dignities: "Vir illustris, comes domesticorum equitum, et consul ordinarius." The "vir illustris" signified that the new consul had either filled or was of rank great



enough to fill high official positions in the state. The "comes domesticorum equitum" was his title as commander of the body-guard of the emperor. The "consul ordinarius" declared the true consular dignity itself.

Some of the consular diptychs also add the names of the persons or communities to whom they were sent. Thus, the diptych of Flavius Theodorus Philoxenus, A.D. 525, has the following inscription in Greek iambics, part upon one tablet, part upon the other: "I, Philoxenus the consul, offer this gift to the wise senate."

Another diptych of Flavius Petrus, A.D. 516, has this inscription within a large circle: "I, the consul, offer these presents, though small in value, still ample in honours, to my [senatorial] fathers." This is given by M. Pulszky, in his essay on antique ivories. The same writer quotes the often-cited decree of the emperor Theodosius; by which, because of the honour attached to the receiving of these diptychs, the presenting of them by anyone but the ordinary consuls was forbidden. The law ought not to be omitted here: "Lex xv. Codex Theodosianus, *tit.* xi. De expensis ludorum. Illud etiam constitutione solidamus, ut exceptis consulibus ordinariis, nulli prorsus alteri auream sportulam aut diptycha ex ebore dandi facultas sit. Cum publica celebrantur officia, sit sportulis nummus argenteus, alia materia diptycha."

During the period when these ivory diptychs were in use or fashion, that is (so far as we know) from the first or second centuries to the sixth, the office of consul was entirely in the hands of the emperors, who conferred it on whom they would, and assumed it themselves as often as they thought fit. Augustus was consul thirteen times; Vitellius proclaimed himself perpetual consul; Vespasian eight times; and Domitian seventeen. The consuls, therefore, gradually became mere ciphers in the state. It is true that they presided in the senate and on other public occasions with all the ancient forms; and the mere title, down to

the extinction of the western empire, was nominally the most exalted and honourable of all official positions.

The most complete list which we have of the existing consular diptychs is given by professor Westwood in a carefully written paper read before the Oxford architectural society, and printed in their proceedings for 1862. These are supposed to have been all identified, and, in most instances, by the inscription on the ivory. Nevertheless, we must still acknowledge to a grave doubt about more than one :—

	A. D.
1. M. Julius Philippus Augustus. In the Meyer collection at Liverpool. One leaf . . . . .	248
2. M. Aurelius Romulus Cæsar. In the British museum. One leaf . . . . .	308
3. Rufius Probianus. At Berlin. Both leaves . . . . .	322
4. Anicius Probus. In the treasury of the cathedral of Aosta. Both leaves . . . . .	406
5. Flavius Felix. Bibliothèque Impériale, Paris. One leaf . . . . .	428
6. Valentinian III. In the treasury of the cathedral of Monza. Both leaves . . . . .	430
7. Flavius Areobindus. At Milan, in the Trivulci collection. Both leaves . . . . .	434
8. Flavius Asturius. At Darmstadt. One leaf . . . . .	449
9. Flavius Aetius. At Halberstadt. One leaf . . . . .	454
10. Narius Manlius Boethius. In the bibl. Quiriniana at Brescia. Two leaves . . . . .	487
11. Theodorus Valentianus. At Berlin. Both leaves . . . . .	505
12. Flavius Dagalaiphus Ariobindus. At Lucca; both leaves. At Zurich; both leaves. And in private possession at Dijon; one leaf . . . . .	506
13. Flavius Taurus Clementinus. In the Meyer collection at Liverpool. Both leaves . . . . .	513
14. Flavius Petrus Justinianus. Bibliothèque Impériale, at Paris; one leaf. And at Milan, in the Trivulci collection; both leaves . . . . .	516
15. Flavius Anastasius Paulus Probus Pompeius. At Berlin; one leaf. The other leaf in South Kensington museum. Bibliothèque Impériale, Paris; both leaves. And Verona; one leaf . . . . .	517
16. Flavius Paulus Probus Magnus. Two in the Imperial library at Paris; each one leaf. Another, so attributed, in the Mayer collection at Liverpool; one leaf . . . . .	518
17. Flavius Anicius Justinus Augustus. At Vienna; one leaf . . . . .	519



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|---|------|
| 18. Flavius Theodorus Philoxenus. Bibliothèque Impériale, Paris ;   | A.D. |
| both leaves. And in the Mayer collection ; one leaf ; very          |      |
| doubtful . . . . .  | 525  |
| 19. Flavius Anicius Justinianus Augustus. At Paris . . . . .        | 528  |
| 20. Rufinus Orestes. South Kensington museum. Both leaves . . . . . | 530  |
| 21. Anicius Faustus Albinus Basilius. In the Uffizii, at Florence ; |      |
| one leaf. The companion leaf is in the Brera, at Milan. . . . .     | 541  |

A few remarks may be of use to the student with reference to some of these important diptychs. The leaves of no. 3 now form the covers of a manuscript life of St. Ludgerus. This diptych is erroneously named by Labarte as the most ancient known to exist.

Of no. 5, the other leaf was lost or stolen during the French revolution of 1792.

Mr. Oldfield, a very high authority, suggests that no. 6 should be given to Valentinian II., in which case the date would be about A.D. 380. The earlier date is supported by the great beauty and admirable execution of the diptych.

No. 7 has no inscription : it bears a monogram which contains all the letters of the name Areobindus. It is engraved in the Thesaurus of Gori.

No. 8 was formerly in the church of St. Martin at Liége, and it was long supposed to be lost. Professor Westwood, however, has found the greater portion of one leaf, used as the cover of a book of the gospels in the royal library at Darmstadt. This, probably, is not a fragment of the Liége diptych, but of another of the same consul. The two leaves are engraved in Gori.

A folio volume of more than 200 pages was edited by Hagenbuch in 1738, containing a number of learned essays on the diptych of Manlius Boethius, no. 10. It has at the beginning engravings of both leaves : and the consul is represented on one in a standing position ; on the other, sitting and holding the *mappa* in his right hand. The inscription is unusually obscure : how much so may be judged from the fact that the editor of the

book has collected more than half a dozen different interpretations of it. Some of them are amusing. The inscription on one leaf runs thus: NARMANLBOETHIVSV CETINL, on the other, EXPPPVSECCONSORDET PATRIC. The members of the Academy at Paris, to whom the difficulty had been referred, proposed to read "Natales regios Manlius Boethius vir clarissimus et inlustris ex propria pecunia voto suscepto edixit celebrandos consul ordinarius et patricius." But a more probable reading is, "Narius Manlius Boethius vir clarissimus et inlustris, expræfectus prætorio, præfectus, et comes, consul ordinarius et patricius. Again, against this last some have disputed that the PPP meant three times prefect, and CC twice consul.

We must remember that artists in ivory were driven, because of the narrow limits at their disposal, to use extreme forms of contractions and symbols, scarcely intelligible even in their own time, instead of words: far more so, indeed, than were the carvers of inscriptions upon monumental stones, altars, and sarcophagi.

Professor Westwood leaves the date of no. 11 doubtful: it is remarkable, as representing in a medallion, between the busts of the emperor and empress, the head of Christ with a cruciferous nimbus.

The Paris diptych of the consul Anastasius was long known as the diptych of Bourges, under which name it is well engraved in Montfaucon's "Antiquities": and no. 18 as the diptych of Compiègne; having been given by Charles the Bald in the ninth century to the abbey church of St. Corneille, where the leaves were preserved until its destruction in 1790, and were then transferred to Paris. The diptych is admirably figured in the *Trésor de numismatique et de glyptique* of Lenormant, who refers also to previous writers on this diptych.

Basilius, consul of Constantinople, whose name is attached to no. 21, was the last of the long and illustrious line of consuls. They had continued, with a few short interruptions of the



tribunes, for more than a thousand years. After Basilius, the emperors of the East took the title, until at length it fell into oblivion. The last consul of Rome was Decimus Theodorus Paulinus, A.D. 536. The second leaf of this diptych has been identified by professor Westwood: M. Pulszky believed it to have been lost. It is but a fragment of the right wing of the diptych, the upper half. Gori gives figures of both leaves: he decides against their being of the same pair. Mr. Westwood, however, says that "it is certainly the companion" to the leaf in the Uffizii.

A detailed description and arguments about many of these diptychs will be found in the dissertations printed by Gori in his *Thesaurus*. Other authorities are Du Cange, Mabillon, and Montfaucon. Their statements have been ably and briefly summed up in the very interesting paper already mentioned, read before the architectural society of Oxford, by professor Westwood; and by M. Pulszky in his essay on antique ivories.

A Roman diptych, undescribed, is preserved at Tarragona in Spain, and it is extremely probable that a careful search amongst the treasures still remaining in the churches of that country would discover others. The very learned editor of the *Thesaurus* of Gori (writing more than a hundred years ago) says: "*Suspicio enim invaluit in locupletissimis Hispaniæ sacrariis, quo totius fere orbis donaria confluerunt, multa hujusmodi abscondi, quæ nusquam adhuc comparuere, quia hactenus nec perquisita nec curata.*"

#### CHAPTER IV.

THERE are several very important Roman diptychs and leaves of diptychs, not consular, still extant; some also of greater beauty than any of the examples in the preceding list. Among them is the diptych (already mentioned) of Æsculapius and Hygieia in the Mayer collection at Liverpool; and another, but smaller, of the same subject in a private collection in Switzerland. This last is described by professor Westwood, who possesses a cast of it, as "in much deeper relief than the Fejervary diptych, and full of energy in the design. Here Æsculapius holds a palm-branch in his right hand, and supports his club, round which a serpent is twined, with his left; whilst Hygieia holds a snake in her right hand and, apparently, a large melon in her left." Another is the diptych of cardinal Quirini now at Brescia, having on one leaf, as interpreted by M. Pulszky, Phædra and Hyppolytus; and on the other Diana and Virbius. This is probably of the third century.

Another is the famous diptych, long known as the Tablets of Sens, but now at Paris in the Imperial library and forming the covers of a thirteenth century manuscript, containing "The Office of fools," or, rather, the Office of the feast of the circumcision. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries some childish and improper jests and plays were allowed in churches on the first day of the year. This "Office of fools" seems to have been a complete arrangement for the day; with mass, matins, and hours.



The whole affair was something like (but without the reverential decorum) the festival of the boy-bishop, celebrated in more than one of our English cathedrals about the same period, and was probably a relic of the heathen Saturnalia.

These tablets, which are somewhat similar in style to the sarcophagi of the third century, are engraved by Labarte in his album. On one leaf is represented Bacchus in a car drawn by centaurs; on the other is Diana in a chariot drawn by two bulls. Both subjects are surrounded by mythological figures. They are engraved also in Lacroix, *Arts of the middle ages*, as an illustration of book-binding: and in the second volume of the *Monumens antiques inédits*, by Millin.

There is a diptych of perhaps the fifth century in the treasury of the cathedral of Monza; one leaf representing Calliope sounding the lyre, and the other some unknown philosopher. Mr. Oldfield, in his excellent catalogue with very valuable notes of the Arundel series of fictile ivories, supposes the muse to be some Roman lady in an ideal character. He objects to Gori's suggestion that the other leaf represents a poet, taking the characteristics to be those certainly of a philosopher. Another is in the public library at Paris, the two leaves having six muses, each of them accompanied by an author. These last have been guessed at by M. de Witte, who places the diptych in the fourth century. Neither M. Pulszky nor professor Westwood is inclined to agree with these guesses, except that one may perhaps be Euripides grouped with Melpomene. The workmanship is rude and the figures carved in high relief. Again, another diptych at Vienna in the cabinet of antiquities, is attributed to the time of Justinian. One leaf has a figure representing Rome; the other, Constantinople.

The above are all named in the essay attached to the catalogue of the Fejervary collection by M. Pulszky; and professor Westwood very rightly adds to them one leaf of a diptych in the possession of count Auguste de Bastard, the diptych of St. Gall, the mythological figure of Penthea in the museum of the hôtel Cluny, a

perfect diptych in the cathedral of Novara, and another in the basilica of San Gaudenzio at the same place.

There is no example among all these which surpasses in beauty of execution or in the interest of the subject, two ivory tablets which were formerly the doors of a reliquary in the convent of Moutier in France, in the diocese of Troyes. When M. Pulszky wrote his essay both tablets were supposed to be lost; they had been described and engraved in the *Thesaurus* of Gori, from whose prints alone they were known. Happily both since have been recovered. The left tablet, discovered a few years ago at the bottom of a well, is in the hôtel Cluny, much injured, and the other is in the collection of the South Kensington museum. The South Kensington leaf is probably the most beautiful antique ivory in the world. (See etching.) Each leaf represents a Bacchante; on both they are standing, and the Bacchante on the leaf in the English collection is accompanied by an attendant. Clothed from the shoulders to the feet in a long tunic, she stands near an oak-tree before an altar, on which a fire is lighted, and she is in the act of dropping a grain of incense from a small box held in her left hand. The whole figure is extremely graceful and dignified, the expression of the face earnest and devotional, and the form of the figure rightly expressed beneath the drapery; the hands and feet also well and carefully carved. On the corresponding leaf, preserved at Paris, the Bacchante has no attendant. Her drapery falls negligently suspended from her left shoulder, leaving the right arm and breast exposed. Professor Becker in his "*Gallus*," describing the Lycoris of Virgil's tenth eclogue, says: "Her light *tunica*, without sleeves, had become displaced by her movements and slidden down over her arm, disclosing something more than the dazzling shoulder." He adds in a note that "the wide opening for the neck, and the broad holes for the arms, caused the *tunica* on every occasion of the person's stooping to slip down over the arm. Artists appear to have been particularly fond of this drapery." Such





SKM  
(25A)

IVORY CARVING . ONE LEAF OF THE DIPTYCHON MELERETENSE - H. 11½ in. W. 4¾ in.  
S. K. M. (Nº 212'65) W WISE, FECIT





an arrangement, or rather disarrangement, of drapery would equally happen when the tunic was fastened over the shoulder by a small fibula, as it is represented upon the right arm of the young attendant in the South Kensington leaf. The Paris Bacchante stands before an altar on which a fire burns, and holds in each hand a torch with the flaming end downwards, as if to extinguish them. Her hair is gracefully bound with a riband decorated with ivy leaves, and falls down her back. A pine tree, stiff in design, stands close behind the altar; not to be compared with the oak-tree on the other leaf.

This admirable diptych was, perhaps, a gift on the occasion of some marriage between members of the two patrician families whose names are on the labels: NICOMACHORVM. SYM-MACHORVM; or it may possibly have formed the cover of the marriage contract itself, the *tabulae nuptiales* of which Juvenal speaks; or perhaps it was a joint offering to the temple of Bacchus or Cybele. The last supposition would be confirmed if the omitted word was "religio," as suggested by Passeri, who believes that the two families took the opportunity of recording upon this diptych, on some occasion of importance common to both of them, their determination to uphold the old heathen worship against the doctrines and influence of Christianity, at that time widely extending.

Before we pass to the large series of ivory carvings executed between the eighth or ninth and the fifteenth centuries, there is one very celebrated piece about which a few words may be said: a superb leaf of a diptych, preserved in the British museum. The other leaf is lost and has probably been destroyed; nor is there any record (it is believed) from whence that museum obtained the ivory. It has been in the collection for many years.

The plaque itself is one of the largest known: more than sixteen inches in length by nearly six in width. The subject is an angel, standing on the highest of six steps under an arch supported on two Corinthian columns; he holds a globe with a cross above

it in his right hand; in his left a long staff, to the top of which, as if half resting on it like a warrior on his lance, the hand is raised

above his head. He is clothed in a tunic and an ample cloak or mantle falling round him and over the shoulders in graceful folds. His head is bound round with a fillet, and the feet have sandals. There is no antique ivory carving which surpasses this in grandeur of design, in power and force of expression, or in the excellence of its workmanship. Although some foreign writers are disposed to place the date of it so late as the time of Justinian, we shall be more correct in attributing it, with Mr. Oldfield, to the fifth or even to the end of the fourth century. Nor, looking at it, can we hesitate to claim for the earliest Christian art, after Christianity was recognised by Constantine, a place by the side of the best works of pagan times. If we select this, and the book-covers in the treasury of the cathedral at Milan, and the well-known book-cover in the public library at Paris, we shall find no western



work in ivory to equal them in quality and beauty of workmanship from the fifth to the thirteenth century.

We owe the preservation of many of these consular and mytho-



logical diptychs to the circumstance that when the practice of sending them as presents had (it may be) for some time been discontinued, another use was found by adapting them to Christian purposes. In some cases the subjects or titles of the diptychs were altered; as, for example, in one of the diptychs preserved at Monza. This was originally a consular diptych, of late work, coarse in style and manner of execution. The consul is represented on each wing, raising the *mappa circensis* in the usual way: on one, however, he is standing; on the other he is sitting upon a kind of throne. On one leaf the top of the consul's head has been shaved, to show the clerical tonsure; and in the blank space of two small panels, immediately beneath the arch under which he stands, the title S[an]C[tu]S GREG°R[ius] is cut in high relief. On the other leaf above the sitting consul, on the corresponding panels, DAVID REX is inscribed in similar letters. Both the wings are engraved by Gori. It must not be omitted that some late writers have argued that this diptych is not a palimpsest; that it is merely an imitation of the preceding consular diptychs, and not earlier than the seventh or eighth century. But the whole character is unlike mere imitation; and the shaving of the head, the alteration of the ornamented top of the sceptre or staff, and the cutting of the inscription on the tablets, might without difficulty have been made for the required and more modern purpose.

It is easy to understand how later possessors of consular diptychs were induced to make presents of them to their bishops and churches; and in some instances, probably, in the sixth century, those originally sent to high ecclesiastical persons were at once transferred to pious uses. Instead of containing the lists of the consuls, the diptychs then inclosed the names of martyrs, saints, or bishops who were to be commemorated in the public service of the Church. These lists were read at mass: of the saints at that part of the canon which is now known as the *Communicantes*; and of the dead at the *Memento*, after the consecration of the Eucharist. Frequent reference to the custom is to be found in

the old ritualists, and full information and a cloud of authorities on the subject in the learned work of Salig, on diptychs. The leaves of several such diptychs still exist, and sometimes with the names not written on wax, but carved or incised upon the ivory itself.

One very remarkable example is the diptych, now at Liverpool, of Flavius Clementinus, consul A.D. 513. Upon the back of each leaf a long Greek inscription has been incised, done, beyond doubt, in the first year of pope Hadrian, A.D. 772, when the diptych was given to some church for sacred use. The list of names inscribed, to be prayed for, includes that of the donor.

The two inscriptions are to be read across both divisions, and were engraved probably upon the ivory by some one not well skilled in the language. There are several faults, both in spelling and in the letters: for example, we have *στομεν*; *Θεωτωκος*; *ελεως*; and *ι* often instead of *η*.

The inscription is to this effect: "✠ Let us stand well. ✠ Let us stand with reverence. ✠ Let us stand with fear. Let us attend upon the holy oblation, that in peace we may make the offering to God. The mercy, the peace, the sacrifice of praise, the love of God and of the Father and of our Saviour Jesus Christ be upon us, Amen. In the first year of Adrian, patriarch of the city. Remember, Lord, thy servant John, the least priest of the church of St. Agatha. Amen. ✠ Remember, Lord, thy servant Andrew Machera. Holy Mother of God; holy Agatha. ✠ Remember, Lord, thy servant and our pastor Adrian the patriarch. ✠ Remember, Lord, thy servant, the sinner, John the priest."

Another example is the diptych of Anastasius, A.D. 517, of which one leaf, n<sup>o</sup> 368, is in the South Kensington collection. Upon this leaf the portion of a single word "GISI" is now alone to be deciphered; when Wiltheim saw it, more than a hundred years ago at Liege, he read "IGISI," and supposed it to be part of the name of Ebregisus, the twenty-fourth bishop of Tongres, in



the seventh century. But upon the other leaf, which is now preserved at Berlin, Gori was able to make out a considerable portion. "Offerentes . . . O . . . eorum p. pi . . . ecclesia catholica quam eis dominus adsignare dignetur . . . facientes commemorationem beatissimorum apostolorum et martyrum omniumque sanctorum. Sanctæ Mariæ Virginis, Petri, Pauli, *etc.*" But he owns that some even of these words are conjectural.

The diptych of Justinianus, in the public library at Paris, is one more example of the same kind. Inside are written litanies of the ninth century, with the names of saints inserted who were particularly revered at Autun.

Another half of a consular diptych may be mentioned, a single leaf, in which instance the original carving has not only been removed but the ivory has been sawn into two pieces. As it happens, both fragments are in this country—one in the British museum, the other in the South Kensington collection, n<sup>o</sup>. 266. The two together have still sufficient traces left to enable us to recognise the old design: a consul seated in the usual way, under a round arch. Below, there seem to have been the two boys or servants emptying their sacks of money and presents.

This mutilation occurred about the eighth or ninth century; and the other side of the leaf was then carved with subjects taken from the gospels. It was an unnecessary injury to destroy and plane away the first design. As the new purpose was probably to decorate the panels of some shrine or book-cover, the old carvings might have been concealed when the plaques were inlaid, in the same manner as the very curious pieces were treated, now at South Kensington, n<sup>os</sup>. 253, 254, and 257.

It would be a subject far too extensive to attempt to give a history of the use and purpose of diptychs in the public service of the Christian Church. Their origin is to be traced to the very earliest times; perhaps to the apostolic age. Mention is made of them in the liturgy of St. Mark. Gori (or his author) quotes also the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Dionysius the Areopagite. This is

certainly not the writing of the true Dionysius, the contemporary of St. Paul. Yet, putting the pseudo-Dionysius as late as the fifth century, his evidence is valuable, and he speaks of the use of diptychs as of things long known.

Numerous treatises and dissertations, even long books, have been written on the subject; and it would be idle work to repeat the names of the authors who are referred to, over and over again, by most writers on ivory carvings. In fact, the learning which some of these exhibit might much better have been shown if their subject had been the primitive history and practices of the Church. Except to state the mere fact of their use, the connection of ceremonial ecclesiastical diptychs with sculpture in ivory requires only a few remarks.

The common use of such diptychs is well and shortly summed up in a dissertation printed by Gori in his *Thesaurus*. The summary may be given in few words, and, moreover, the dissertation itself is written in explanation of the diptych of the consul Clementinus just mentioned, which we are now fortunate enough to possess in England, in the Mayer collection at Liverpool. Inside the leaves, as has been already observed, is an inscription in Greek of the eighth century, to be read during mass, desiring the people to be devout and reverent and to pray for the persons whose names were to be recited.

The Christian diptychs were intended for four purposes. First come those in which the names of all the baptised were entered, a kind of *Fasti ecclesiae*, and answering to the registers kept now in every parish. Second, those in which were recorded the names of bishops and of all who had made offerings to the church or other benefactions. This list included the names of many persons still living. Third, those in which were recorded the names of saints and martyrs; and, naturally, in various places the names would be particularly of saints who in their lives had been connected with the locality. Such additions are of the utmost importance in tracing the history of ancient lists which have come down to our own time.



Diptychs of this class were read aloud at mass, as a sign of the communion between the Church triumphant and the Church militant on earth. Fourth, those in which were written the names of dead members of the particular church or district, who having died in the true faith and with the rites of the church were to be remembered at mass.

As regards the living, the continuance of their names in the diptychs was of the highest consequence; to be erased was equal to the denunciation of them as heretics and unworthy of communion.

In the diptychs also were probably sometimes added the names of people who were sick or in trouble.

But besides these four objects for which Christian diptychs were made, there was another which must certainly have caused the production of many large sculptured works in ivory from the seventh to the tenth century: namely, for the purpose of exciting devotion and as a means also of teaching the ignorant. Ivory tablets or diptychs of this description are ordered to be exposed to the people in the old Ambrosian rite for the church of Milan.

One of the most celebrated relics in ivory was executed about the middle of the sixth century; the throne or chair made for Maximian, archbishop of Ravenna from the year 546 to 556. This is now preserved among the treasures of the cathedral at Ravenna, and is engraved in the great book of Du Sommerard, and by Labarte in his handbook. The chair has a high back, round in shape, and is entirely covered with plaques of ivory, arranged in panels richly carved in high relief with scenes from the gospels and with figures of saints. The plaques have borders with foliated ornaments; birds and animals, flowers and fruits, filling the intermediate spaces. Du Sommerard names amongst the most remarkable subjects, the annunciation, the adoration of the wise men, the flight into Egypt, and the baptism of our Lord. Sir Digby Wyatt (in his lecture before the Arundel society) says that this chair, having

"always been carefully preserved as a holy relic, has fortunately escaped destruction and desecration; and, but for the beautiful tint with which time has invested it, would wear an aspect little different from that which it originally presented in the lifetime of the illustrious prelate for whom it was made. This valuable object could hardly have been all wrought at one time, as Dr. Kugler distinctly traces in it the handling of three different artists, who could scarcely have all lived at the same period. Some of the plates resemble diptychs. Thus, the series portraying the history of Joseph in Egypt is quite classical; another, and less able artist in the same style, provided the plates for the back, and in one set of five single figures the Greek artificer stands apparent. The simplest explanation appears to be that the throne was made up by the last-mentioned artist out of materials provided for him, and that what was wanting to make it entire was supplied by him." Probably the different plaques were carved by several sculptors; but Dr. Kugler's supposition that the whole chair was not made by contemporary artists (in short, at one time) is scarcely probable.

Speaking of and praising the Ravenna chair, Passeri offers some very useful remarks by way of caution against the hasty conclusions which some make, who set down all ancient large plaques of ivory as having been the leaves of diptychs: "*Vidi etiam Ravennæ in chartophilacio principis ecclesiæ sedem eburneam sancti Maximiani episcopi quinto seculo operosissime efformatam, cujus ambitum undequaque adornant tabulæ eburneæ amplitudinis fere sesquipedalis, quam plerumque ebur patitur anaglypho opere, et scitissima manu elaboratæ, quæ si disjectæ et singulares occurrent imprudentibus facile imponderent, ut inter diptycha censerentur. Nec ista nominis quæstio est, nam longe alia mente explicandæ sunt missiles consulum tabellæ, atque in illis expressa emblemata, quæ omnia ad consulatum ejusque pompas pertinent, alia vero sculpturæ omnes, quæ in alium usum parabantur. Hæc observatio facile prodit errorem illorum, qui diptychis ad censuerunt laterculos, nullo consule desig-*



natos, cum musarum, poetarum, Bacchantum ac deorum imaginibus, quæ mihi nullam aliam ingerunt speciem, quam quod aliquando libros contexerint, quibus parerga adluderent. Sunt præterea quædam imperatorum inferioris ævi simulacra tabellis eburneis incisa, in quibus nulla cardinum vestigia apparent, ut potius videatur sedes honorarias decorasse, quam quod diptychorum loco essent, quum præsertim exterior illorum ornatus superne in acutum desinat ; quod a diptychorum instituto quam maxime abhorret."



## CHAPTER V.

ABOUT the time when the chair of Ravenna was made, that is, in the sixth century, sculpture in ivory again sensibly declined. The figures in Byzantine work of that period begin to be characterised by sharpness and meagreness of form, and lengthiness of proportion; in the heads, however, we yet find a good expression; and especially in representations of our Lord dignity and resignation. The costume also gradually became more and more covered with ornaments and jewels; although the ancient classical robes were still copied, and apostles were clothed in togas, or the virgin in a chlamys and tunic, or the magi in Phrygian caps.

Troubles, moreover, arose, and about the year 750 there sprang up in the east very bitter theological quarrels, especially having reference to the lawfulness of the use of images, not only in churches but for private devotion. The spirit of Mahometanism, strictly and dogmatically condemning without distinction, whether in sculpture or in paintings, all representations of the deity and of man, first shown in the near neighbourhood of the Holy Land, spread rapidly from one country to another. The Christian iconoclasts of Constantinople, even if they did not follow the heresy of Mahomet in this matter to its fullest extent, at least equalled it in hatred of all holy images and sacred sculpture, and in the severity with which they persecuted the workers and purchasers of such works. Towards the middle of the eighth century the power and influence of these fanatics reached their height, and with Leo



the Isaurian on the throne received the fullest support which an emperor could give. We must attribute to the rage of the iconoclasts, indiscriminating in its fury, not only the destruction of Christian monuments and sculpture (and especially those which were said to be miraculous, *ἀχειροποίηταί*,) but of many of the most important and most valuable remains, then still existing, of the best periods of ancient Greek art. This persecution continued for more than a hundred years, until the reign of Basil the Macedonian, A.D. 867; who, by permitting again the right use of images, restored to the arts their free exercise.

In consequence of these excesses in the east the west of Europe gained greatly. Not only works of art were brought by fugitives from Constantinople to France, Germany, and other countries, thus furnishing models from which copies could be multiplied and a better taste introduced, but the workmen and artists themselves, driven into exile, came and were hospitably received and founded everywhere new schools of art. Charlemagne especially, too wise a prince to overlook the certain benefits and advantages which were thus offered, liberally patronised the strangers and gave them his assistance and protection everywhere.

Some writers of great authority upon paintings have said that the iconoclast emigration did not much influence art in Rome and Italy. The Roman artists, as shown in the few mosaics which remain, "trod the path of decline, independent in their weakness. To the faults which had been confirmed by centuries of existence, others were superadded. To absence of composition, of balance in distribution and connection between figures, were added neglect and emptiness of form, a general sameness of feature, and the total disappearance of relief by shadow. Still the reminiscence of antique feeling remained in certain types, in a sort of dignity of expression and attitude, and in breadth of draperies, which, though defined by parallel lines, were still massive." Crowe and Cavalcaselle, from whom the quotation is taken, may not intend, however, to include in this statement sculptures in ivory.

There are still remaining, in the collections both at home and abroad, some examples of carved ivories from the fifth century to the time of Charlemagne. The woodcut represents one of the



most important and remarkable works known of this period. Although there is a great similarity of style between this ivory and a silver vase of the sixth century in the Blacas collection, in the British museum, there is still difficulty in suggesting even a probable date, which can scarcely be later than the early part of the seventh century; nor is it more easy to speculate on the original use of the vase. A loose ring, cut from the same block of ivory, surrounds the foot; and, if the vase was made for some very sacred purpose, we may suppose that the ring carried a thin veil to be thrown over the whole for further security and reverence. The cover is of later date, and where the ivory has cracked there is a repair excellently done by some mediæval jeweller with a small gold chain

which extends from the rim downwards about two inches. This piece is in the British museum.

Unlike the vase, which is good both in design and workmanship, the early ivories of western Europe are rude and many of



them even barbarous in manner and workmanship; but about the year 800 a sure result of the influx of Greek artists is to be seen, and the style advanced with a very evident progression, subject only to a short interval of deterioration at the end of the tenth century. After this brief check there followed a distinct improvement, impressed, however, with a feeling and type peculiar to the eleventh and first half of the twelfth century. We find the figures calm and, as it were, collected in design, but placed in stiff and unnatural positions, the draperies close and clinging and broken up into numerous little folds, ornamented also still more largely than before with small jewels or beads. The school of the lower Rhine kept itself to a certain extent free from these faults; their figures preserved more movement, their modelling was better, their draperies more natural and disposed with greater art.

Christianity spread gradually though slowly over western Europe from the age of Charlemagne, and, as it spread, ivory was used more and more for the decoration of ecclesiastical furniture, especially of books and reliquaries. The adaptation of the large tablets given by the consuls has been already spoken of: and not only were the old diptychs still remaining in the seventh or eighth centuries applied to their new purpose for the public services of the church, but many new diptychs must also have been provided. Pyxes for the consecrated and unconsecrated wafers, retables or ornamented screens to be placed upon altars, holy water buckets, handles for flabella, episcopal combs, croziers, and pastoral staffs were made in fast increasing numbers.

There is ample evidence, not only from examples which have been preserved down to our own times but from contemporary writers, of the large extent to which the employment of ivory reached in the Carlovingian period, from the end of the eighth to the middle of the tenth century. Eginhard, writing to his son, sends him a coffer made by a contemporary artist, enriched with columns of ivory after the antique style; Hildoward, bishop of Cambrai, A.D. 790, orders a diptych of ivory to be made for him

in the twelfth year of his pontificate : an inventory of Louis le Débonnaire, in 823, mentions a diptych of ivory, a statuette, and a coffer ; his son-in-law, count Everard, leaves in his will writing tablets, a chalice and coffer, an evangelisterium ornamented with bas-reliefs, and a sword and belt with similar decorations, all of ivory ; Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims, in 845, orders covers to be made for the works of St. Jerome with plaques of ivory, and also for a sacramentary and lectionary.

Several of the most important of the existing examples of this famous Carlovingian school are named in Labarte's useful book : among them, especially, the diptych preserved in the treasury of the cathedral of Milan, and of which a plate is given in the album, *pl.* xiii. ; the two plaques which form the cover of the sacramentary of Metz, now in the public library at Paris ; and a bas-relief of a book of gospels at Tongres, in the diocese of Liège, remarkable for the simplicity of the composition, the soberness of its ornamentation and correctness of design, all of which qualities are frequent characteristics of the work of the ninth century.

Georgius says that the very ancient *tabulæ eburneæ* which he saw in the church of St. Riquier in Picardy (*Centulensi thesauro*), and those given to his church by Riculfus, bishop of Elne, in Narbonne, A.D. 915, were sacred diptychs.

Mr. Oldfield gives an excellent selection of Carlovingian ivories in his catalogue of the casts of the Arundel society, classes 4, 5, and 6.

In the same period we must also place, contrary to the judgment of Du Sommerard, who would suggest an earlier date, a book cover in the public library at Amiens, carved with the baptism of Clovis and with two miracles of Remigius. On the next page is an engraving of this plaque from Lacroix's book on the arts of the middle ages. In the scene of the baptism of Clovis, which occupies the lowest of the three compartments, the dove is seen descending upon the head of the king with the famous ampulla and sacred oil used in the coronations of the sovereigns of France.





It is scarcely necessary perhaps to remark that the holy water buckets above mentioned, p. 47, are not to be confounded with stoups; the one was carried by an acolyte in attendance on the priest, the other fixed against the wall at the entrance of the church. That *situla* or buckets were made of ivory, and for the especial purpose just named, is certain from an example preserved in the treasury of the cathedral of Milan, which is engraved in the appendix to the third volume of Gori's Thesaurus. This *situla* is richly carved with scripture subjects and round the upper border is incised the legend,

"Vates Ambrosii Gotfredus dat tibi sancte,  
Vas veniente sacram spargendum Cæsare lympham."

Gotfred was archbishop of Milan in the year 975.



## CHAPTER VI.

As time went on, crucifixes, statuettes, triptychs, diptychs, and other portable helps to private devotion were made in ivory in great quantity; a consequence probably of the repeated travels of men to the east during the crusades. The term triptych for religious tablets composed of a centre piece and of one wing on each side, sufficient in width when folded to cover the centre, is commonly used in the description of various collections of ivories, because, whether or not exactly right, it is perfectly well understood and fully explains itself. Indeed, although triptych or pentaptych or polyptych may, in strictness and in its first signification, mean only (as it might happen) three or five or many leaves fastened together on one side by hinges or threads like the leaves of a book, yet the name triptych may be fairly applied to tablets two of which hinge on the outside edges of the opposite sides of the third, and are intended to fold across and cover it. Where these wings are made, in order to surround the centre, of more than two pieces (and in such cases they generally inclose and protect also some larger carving or a statuette) the name shrine seems to be more appropriate and better to describe the object.

Triptychs are spoken of more than once by Anastasius, the author of the *Liber Pontificalis*. For example, in his life of pope Hadrian, A.D. 772, he mentions one which had in the centre the face of our Saviour, and on each wing images of angels. It is

greatly to be regretted that Anastasius is so miserably concise in his description of the marvellous works of art which he enumerates. We look in vain for any details or for the name of a single artist.

The use of ivory in the middle ages, from the eighth to the beginning of the sixteenth century, was not confined to church and pious purposes. It was adopted for numberless things of common life. Not for common people perhaps, because its value and rarity were too great; but for the daily use of wealthy persons. Caskets and coffers, horns, hilts of weapons, mirror cases, toilet combs, writing-tablets, book-covers, chessmen and draughtsmen, were either made entirely of ivory, walrus and elephant, or were largely inlaid and ornamented with it. Examples of works of each of these kinds are to be found in the South Kensington museum; and with regard to some of them it is necessary to make a few remarks.

First, to take caskets. The most beautiful of these is no. 146, a work of the fourteenth century. This is richly decorated on the top and the four sides with subjects taken from romances, then well known and commonly read. Other caskets may be noticed, nos. 216 and 2440, which are of earlier date; and nos. 301 and 10, of Spanish work in a remarkable style, half Saracenic, carrying down to the eleventh or twelfth century the peculiar treatment and ornamentation shown in the small admirably executed round box of the caliph Mostanser Billah, no. 217. There are many plaques in the same collection which probably once formed portions of coffers or caskets; some of them reaching as far back as the ninth century; but it is not possible to say with certainty whether they were made originally for that purpose or not.

The most curious and perhaps the most valuable old English casket existing is in the British museum, which it will be well to notice in this place before we pass to other examples in the South Kensington collection. Engravings (kindly lent by Mr. Franks) of two portions of it are also given.



This casket is of the eighth century, nine inches long, seven and a half in width, and a trifle more than five inches in height. The material is not ivory, not even of the walrus, but of the bone of a whale. Unfortunately it is imperfect and in parts damaged; of the fourth side only a small piece remains. The cover and the sides are richly carved in sharp and clear relief with mythical and scripture subjects; and each panel has a runic inscription within a broad border, except the top on which one word only is carved, "Ægili."

The cover has, in a single compartment, men in armour attacking a house which is defended by a man with a bow and arrow; this



panel has been supposed to refer to some local circumstance, and the name *Ægili* is to be read with the two words upon the fourth side, meaning "suffers deceit" or "treachery." One side has the myth of Romulus and Remus: the two infants with the wolf in the middle; on either side shepherds kneeling, and a legend explaining the subject: "Romulus and Remus [Remus] twain brothers outlay [were exposed] close together; a she wolf fed them in Rome city." The front of the casket has two compartments; in one, the giving up the head of St. John the Baptist whose body lies stretched upon the ground; the other has the offering of the wise men, with the

word "magi" in runes above them. On the back is carved, above, the storming of Jerusalem and the flight of the Jews, as



explained by the inscription engraved partly in runes, partly in Latin, "Here fight Titus and the Jews. Here fly from Jerusalem its inhabitants." Below are two other subjects; the meaning of them very obscure: to one is attached the word "doom," to the other "hostage;" both in runes. Round the whole casket an inscription is carved, commemorating the taking of the whale which supplied the bone. This has been translated,

"The whale's bones from the fishes flood  
I lifted on Fergen Hill;  
He was gashed to death in his gambols,  
As a-ground he swam in the shallows."

The name Fergen occurs in a charter of the eleventh century, and has been identified with the present Ferry-hill, in the county of Durham.

The history of the casket is very short, and cannot be better stated than in the words of Mr. Stephens from whose book on Runic monuments, a work of much interest, the above description is abridged. He says that it "is one of the costliest treasures of English art now in existence. As a specimen of Northumbrian



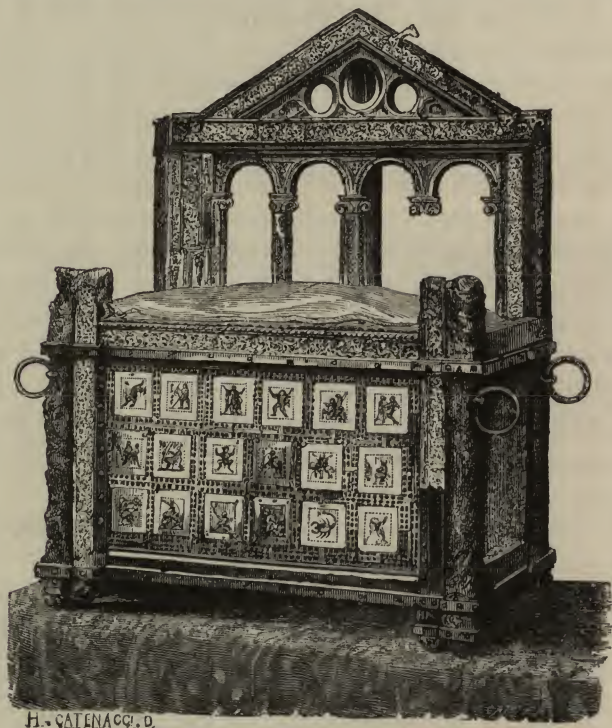
work and of Northumbrian folk-speech, it is doubly precious. But we know nothing of its history. Probably, as the gift of some English priest or layman, it may have lain for centuries in the treasury of one of the French churches, whence it came into the hands of a well-known dealer in antiquities in Paris. There it was happily seen and purchased, some years ago, by our distinguished archæologist, Aug. W. Franks, Esq. The price given for it was very great." The casket has been most liberally presented by Mr. Franks to the British museum, and the nation (once more to quote Mr. Stephens) "is now in possession of one of the greatest rarities in Europe."

There are several other coffers or caskets in the South Kensington collection especially worthy of remark. Among them the Veroli casket, no. 216, so called from having been long preserved in the treasury of the cathedral of Veroli, near Rome, from whence it was obtained in 1861. This is the most perfect example known of a peculiar style of art which prevailed in some parts of Italy from the latter part of the eleventh to the end of the twelfth century. At first sight works of this kind might almost be attributed to a time as early as the third or fourth century, the imitation of the classic mode of treatment, as well as the nature often of the subjects themselves, favouring such a supposition. There seems to be little doubt, however, that they must all be placed at a much later date.

No one is more entitled to be listened to on any disputed question about the date of ivory carvings than Mr. Nesbitt. He tells us, in a very able memoir of St. Peter's chair at Rome, printed for the Society of antiquaries (speaking on this very point), that he agrees with padre Garrucci in the opinion that works like the Veroli casket date from about the eleventh century. "They are all characterised by certain peculiarities and mannerisms. Among these are an exaggerated slenderness of limb, a marked prominence of the knee-joints, and a way of rendering the hair by a mass of small knobs. The subjects are generally taken from some mythological story, and some work of classical art has, in many cases,

evidently been copied by the ivory carver; but the story is often misunderstood and misrepresented, and the movement of the figures copied with so much exaggeration, as often to become ridiculous. Animals are generally represented with great truth and spirit, and in very natural attitudes. The execution is usually remarkably neat and sharp, and the state of preservation of the ivory very good." Caskets of this style and date almost always have the panels surrounded by the same kind of border filled with rosettes.

The ivories inserted in the so-called Chair of St. Peter, just



H. CATENACQ. D.

referred to, are of great importance upon this question. The woodcut shows, in a general way, its present condition and the arrangement of the carvings, which represent the labours of Hercules :



and the student should read Mr. Nesbitt's paper, already quoted from.

There is a very curious plaque in the British museum which is also of value with regard to the date of such works as the Veroli casket. It has been perhaps a book-cover, perhaps a panel of a reliquary. The chief subject is Christ in glory, carved in the stiff Byzantine manner of the tenth or eleventh century; and in the lower left-hand corner is a group of boys, having the peculiarities of style just mentioned. Mr. Nesbitt notices another example which may be found engraved in the *Thesaurus of Gori*: "a tablet in the museum at Berlin, on which Christ, attended by angels, is represented in the usual Byzantine style, while below are the forty saints in very natural attitudes, and with much truth and skill."

The woodcut shows the lid of a small casket of, perhaps, the eleventh century: Spanish work, during the period of the occupation by the Moors; and there are frequent references to ivory coffers, caskets, and boxes, in inventories and



other documents of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. In 1502 the following entry is among the privy purse expenses of Elizabeth of York: "Item, the same day [the 28th day of May] to maistres Alianor Johns for money by hir geven in reward to a servaunt of the lady Lovell for bringing a chest of iverrey with the passion of our Lord thereon: iij s iiij d." This lady Lovell was probably the wife of Sir Thomas Lovell, treasurer of the household, and one of the executors of the will of Henry the seventh.

Six or seven caskets are named among the treasures of Lincoln cathedral in the year 1536: two "with images round about." In 1518 there belonged to the church of St. Mary Outwich, London,

"a box of eivery, garnyshede with silver" according to "the inventorye of all the howrnaments" of that parish: and, "item, a box of yvory with xj relyks therein." In 1534, "a litill box of ivery bound with gymes [gimmals] of silver" was among the goods of the guild of the blessed Virgin, at Boston in Lincolnshire. Nearly a hundred years before there was "a lytill yvory cofyr with relekys" among the goods belonging to the church of St. Mary Hill, London.

Going back to earlier times—and not to quote from French or German documents which have been referred to by foreign writers—we find in the inventory of the treasures belonging to St. Paul's cathedral in 1295, "*Pixis eburnea fracta in fundo, continens unam parvam pixidem eburneam vacuum.*" "*Item, duæ coffræ eburneæ modo vacuæ.*" Other caskets are mentioned; one, small and beautiful, with lock and key and silver clamps; and several pyxes, containing relics.

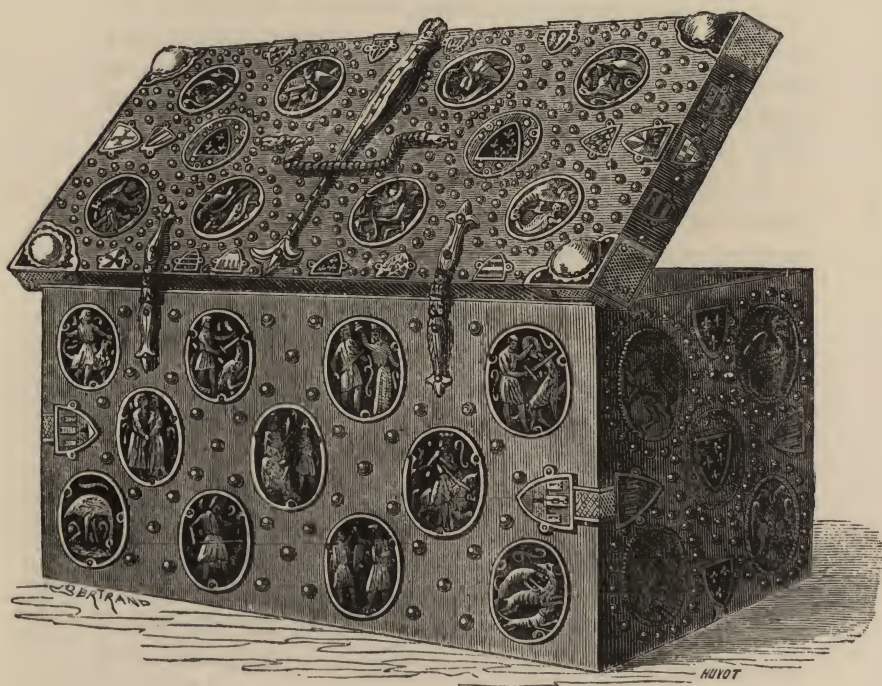
So, again, there were in the treasury at Durham, in 1383, "an ivory casket, containing a vestment of St. John the Baptist;" "a small coffer of ivory, containing a robe of St. Cuthbert;" and other "ivory caskets with divers relics."

Caskets and coffers of this period were not uncommonly decorated with small painted medallions of coats of arms, or of figures, as in the woodcut on the next page. Two examples are in the South Kensington museum, nos. 1618 and 369.

There are in many collections ivory boxes of round shape, which are commonly set down as having been used for preserving the consecrated host in tabernacles, or for carrying it to the sick. Frequently, these may have been originally made for that purpose; but it is not easy always to determine the fact exactly. The word *Pyx* in its earliest meaning included any small box or case, and particularly for holding ointments or spices; and often, when we find the word used in inventories of the middle ages, it is further explained as containing relics or other things. Thus, there was in the Durham treasury in the fourteenth century "item, a tooth of



St. Gengulphus, good for the falling sickness, in a small ivory pyx"; and in St. Paul's cathedral, about the same time, two ivory pyxes, one containing relics of St. Augustine, the other of St. Agnes. Nor is the size a sure guide to determine the doubt: although by many people all small round boxes of ivory would seem to be understood



as having been certainly used for preserving the eucharist. Du Cange quotes from Leo Ostiensis, "in pyxidulis reliquiæ sanctorum reconditæ sunt." On the other hand, there can be no question that for many centuries, and more especially in the earlier ages, round boxes of ivory were in constant and general use for preserving and carrying the Sacrament. Thus we see included amongst the property belonging to the church of St. Faith, under

St. Paul's, "*una cupa cuprea deaurata, cum pyxide eburnea sine serura interius clausa, in qua reponatur eucharistia.*" From Waddingham, in Norfolk, the queen's commissioners report in 1565 that they have destroyed "one pyx of yvorie, broken in peces." The following also may be quoted from the will of king Henry the seventh, though the material is not specified: "Forasmuch as we have often to our inwarde displeasure, seen in diverse churches of oure Reame, the holy Sacrament kept in ful simple and inhonest pixes, we have commaunded to cause to be made furthwith pixes, in a greate nombre, after the fashion of a pixe which we have caused to be delyvered to theym, etc."

When, therefore, we find a small round box which is ornamented with subjects from the Gospel or with divine types and emblems or the like, we may safely call it a pyx, in its proper ecclesiastical meaning. When an example is carved with subjects relating to any saint it may or may not have been made for a sacramental pyx: it may indeed have been changed from its first use as a reliquary and afterwards employed for the more sacred use. Of this kind, perhaps, is the very curious round box of the sixth century with subjects from the life of St. Mennas, exhibited in 1871 by Mr. Nesbitt at a meeting of the Society of antiquaries; which is further remarkable as being the earliest known representation on an ivory box of events in the life of a saint.

Du Cange gives references to three English provincial synods of the thirteenth century, as if ivory pyxes were distinctly ordered by their canons. But it is not so. Order is merely given that the Sacrament should be reserved and carried to the sick in proper pyxes: "*in pyxide munda et honesta;*" again, "*circa collum suum in theca honesta, pyxidem deferat.*" But the synod of Exeter in 1287 is more precise and to our present purpose, which orders the priest to carry the eucharist to the sick "*in pyxide argentea vel eburnea.*"

We find from inventories printed by Dugdale in the *Monasticon* that in the fourteenth century, A.D. 1384, there were in the



treasury of St. George's, Windsor, "*una pixis nobilis eburnea, garnita cum luminibus argenteis deauratis,*" etc. : and "*una pixis de eburneo gemellato argenteo, cujus coopertorium frangitur.*" In Lincoln cathedral, in 1557, "A round pix of ivory, having a ring of silver;" and two others, both of ivory with similar bands. Four other ivory pyxes are named in the earlier inventory of the same cathedral, before the spoliation in 1536.

Two other very important and beautiful caskets, at South Kensington, are no. 176 and no. 263. The subject of the first of these, the life of the blessed Virgin, is unusual, although that may probably be not because it was unusual at the time but because very few examples have been preserved. The panels of the other are most richly carved and in the best style of the fourteenth century with scenes from the life of St. Margaret.



## CHAPTER VII.

THE famous romances of the middle ages supplied endless subjects for sculptors in ivory as well as for the painter, the illuminator, and the enameller. They may be referred, in general, to four classes, of which the first and the fourth seem to have been the favourite sources from which were taken the decorations of caskets and mirror cases. They were—1. Those relating to Arthur and the knights of the round table. 2. Those connected with Charlemagne and his paladins. 3. The Spanish and Portuguese romances, which chiefly contain the adventures of Amadis and Palmerin. 4. What may be termed classical romances, which represent the heroes of antiquity in the guise of romantic fiction: such, for example, as the romance of Virgil, of Jason, or of Alexander. To these may be added one more, the romance of the Rose, an allegorical poem which was probably more widely read than any other of the time. From this, realising an allegory, came the frequent subject of the siege of the castle of Love. Many of the romances were written both in prose and verse: three splendid volumes, French manuscripts of the beginning of the fourteenth century, in the British museum, contain the Saint Graal and Lancelot du Lac. The histories of Merlin, Perceval, Meliadus, Tristan, and Perceforest were also amongst the most popular.

The French manuscripts just referred to (*additional*, 10,292) are full of illuminations, some illustrating in an especial way the carvings on ivories of the same date. Another, of the same



character and of like interest and value, is in the Bodleian: the romance of Alexander.

The romance of the Rose was a dull and monotonous poem of perhaps ten thousand lines, from which for nearly three hundred years its readers, if they looked at it with pious and religious eyes, learnt their maxims of morality, of science, and philosophy. Others, again, read it as men now read Ovid's *Art of love* and saw nothing of its mysticism or scholastic subtleties. It was written somewhere about the year 1300, and, with the omission of some five thousand lines in the middle, Chaucer's translation is very accurate and good. It was frequently moralised: in France, by Clement Marot; and in England (perhaps from the French also) long before, by Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln. These made the Rose to be the Virgin Mary, and the towers and the defences of the castle are the four cardinal virtues, and holy chastity, and buxomness, and meekness. The castle itself is thus described:

" This is the castel of love and lisse,  
Of solace, of socour, of joye, and blisse,  
Of hope, of hele, of sikernesse,  
And ful of alle swetnesse."

Among the many fictions which were founded on the traditions of king Arthur none were more common or better known than those which related the love adventures of Lancelot and queen Guinevre; and of Tristan and Isoude, the queen of Mark king of Cornwall. Subjects from both these tales are frequent on ivory caskets and mirror cases. The disgrace of Aristotle comes from the romance of Alexander; and from that of Virgil we have the poet in his mediæval character of magician. Both the poet and the philosopher, in spite of their great age and wisdom, are made fools of by the ladies of the story. One is induced to carry his mistress on his back, the other is hauled up in a basket to a window and left there dangling at sunrise before all the people.

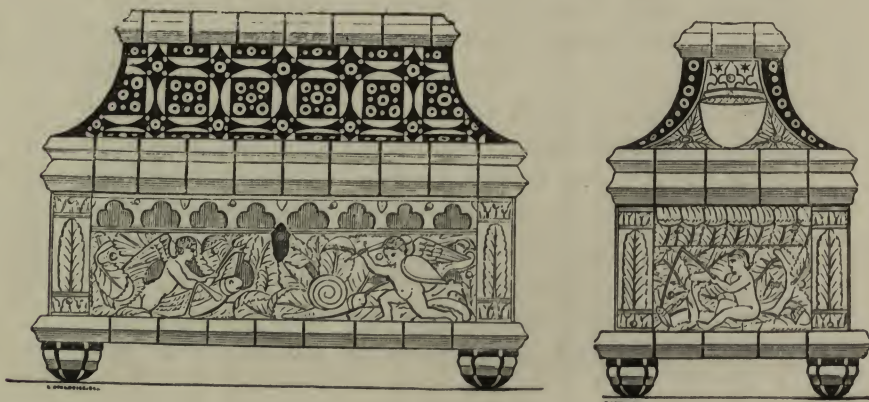
We must not leave caskets without mention of the very graceful open work with which the panels of many of them were often

decorated, and which have come down to us (speaking generally) only in parts or fragments. Two woodcuts are given here, full size,



from a series of small panels, formerly in the Meyrick collection, which is, unhappily, now dispersed.

The South Kensington museum is rich also in the marriage coffers, as they are commonly called, of Italian work of about the fourteenth century. Coffers of this kind, such, for example, as the small casket (in the two woodcuts) no. 2563, were seldom executed





in ivory: almost always in bone of fine quality, sometimes nearly equal to ivory in delicacy of grain and colour. It is probably owing to their general use in Italy at that time that ivory could not be obtained in sufficient quantity, except at great cost; for the workmanship is frequently that of artists who must have been of the highest eminence as sculptors. One of the most interesting of the marriage caskets in the South Kensington museum is no. 5624, formerly in the Soulages collection, of which there is almost a duplicate in the public library at Paris.

Lenormant, in the *Trésor de glyptique*, has given three plates of the Paris casket and says also that another, exactly like it was (when he wrote) in the possession of M. D'Assy, of Meaux.

The largest casket of this kind in England is in the possession of Mr. Julian Goldsmid. It is in excellent preservation and well finished in every respect. The size is certainly unusual: two feet three inches in height, two feet and a half long, and two feet broad. The separate bones which ornament it are filled with shields and armorial bearings; ten on the front and back, seven on each side. The mouldings at the top are richly decorated with bold scrolls of foliage and animals. The top of the coffer and the side mouldings are marquetry, inlaid in diamond-shaped quarries with large pieces of bone.

A coffer of the same school and date, not much less in size and of much higher quality and workmanship, is in private possession at Leamington, in Warwickshire. The sides are filled with small statuettes admirably executed, and perhaps giving the history of some poem or romance. This is, probably, the best example of Italian marriage coffers in this country.

M. Lenormant also refers, as of the same school, to the magnificent *Retable de Poissy*, in the museum of the Louvre, of which Sir D. Wyatt has given the following description: "It was made for Jean de Berry brother of Charles V. and for his second wife, Jeanne, countess of Auvergne. They are represented on it kneeling, and accompanied by their patron saints. It is no less

than seven feet six inches wide, and is one mass of carving. It consists of three arcades, surmounted by canopies, and supported by angle pilasters and a base. The subjects are taken from the New Testament and from the legends of the saints. It is believed



[there can, rather, be no doubt] that it is of Italian workmanship, the little figures having much Giottesque character in their treatment." This famous retable is, like the marriage caskets, carved in bone.

There is no finer specimen of this style and work than the



beautiful predella, formerly in the Gigli-Campana collection, now at South Kensington, no. 7611. It is, unfortunately, not perfect; the centre panel is a later addition and the original piece has been lost. It is possible that there were at one time also other smaller panels. The woodcut shows well the general style of these carvings in bone.

The French and English caskets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were frequently ornamented, like the mirror cases, the combs, and the writing-tablets, with domestic scenes. We have ladies and gentlemen sometimes represented playing at chess or draughts or similar games; sometimes riding, or hawking, or hunting; sometimes in gardens with birds and dogs; sometimes dancing. Subjects of this character are of great importance and interest, no less valuable than illuminations in manuscripts, as showing the dress and the armour and, to a considerable extent, the manners and customs of the day.

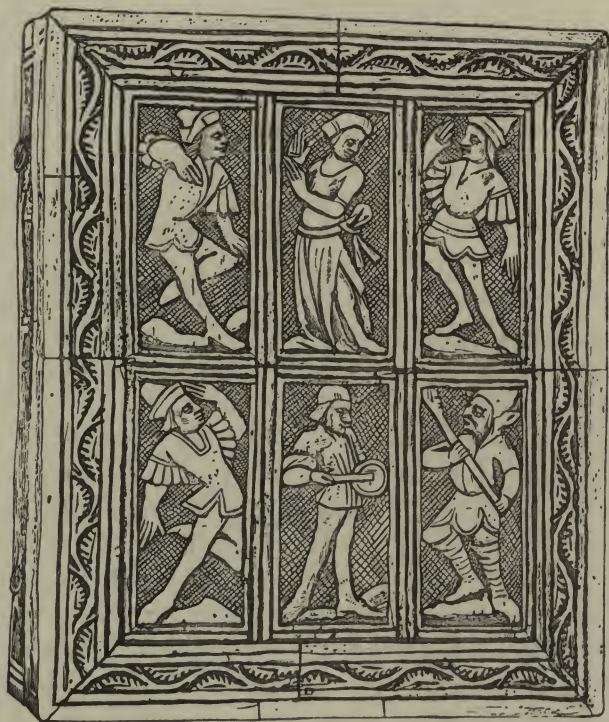
One other class of subjects may be noticed which supplied the decorations of caskets of the fifteenth century, and which is found occasionally on panels of cabinets or the larger kind of household furniture; namely, morris dancers and women playing on musical instruments. Generally, carvings of this description are found upon bone: two examples are in the South Kensington museum, no. 4660 and no. 6747. There was also one in the Meyrick collection, of which a woodcut is given on the next page.

Domestic subjects are of more common occurrence upon combs and mirror cases than on caskets; and, upon the former, scenes also from early legends; occasionally, some circumstance from Scripture. Of Scripture subjects the message from David to Bathsheba is the most frequent; probably, because Bathsheba is represented generally in her bath. There are two examples in the South Kensington museum alone: no. 2143 and no. 468. It is not difficult to understand why scenes from the old story of the fountain of Youth should have been a favourite subject.

It may be observed that the garden scenes on ivory combs

remind us often of the beautiful painting of the "Dream of life" by Orcagna, in the Campo santo, at Pisa.

Combs of ivory and bone are frequently found in tombs of the Roman and Anglo-saxon period in England ; and before that time in British graves. They are often tinged and coloured green, from



lying in contact with metal objects. A very curious one, in the shape of a hand, was mixed with the remains buried in a Pict's house in the north of Scotland ; a double tooth-comb was found on the site of the Roman station at Chesterford, in Essex ; and (to name no more of this kind, for the specimens are very many) an ivory comb was among the relics in the tomb said to be of St.



Cuthbert, at Durham. Mr. Raine also prints an inventory (dated 1383) of relics at Durham, among which are the comb of Malachias the archbishop, the comb of St. Boysil the priest, and the ivory comb of St. Dunstan. Somewhat later than this date is an entry in the register of the cathedral of Glasgow, where a precious burse is mentioned with the combs of St. Kentigern and St. Thomas of Canterbury.

A very curious comb, but much mutilated, is preserved in the library of the Society of antiquaries. It was exhibited in 1764 and engraved in the 8th vol. of the *Archæologia*. The statement is that it was found deeply buried under a street in Aberdeen, and supposed to have been lost there in the time of Edward III. who burnt the city. But the type of the ornaments upon it is of an earlier character than that date.

The comb given by queen Theodolinda at the end of the sixth century to the church of Monza is still kept.

This last would be a ceremonial comb, used formerly by a bishop before celebrating high mass or before other great functions, and included among the vestments and ceremonial ornaments of a bishop of England down to the reign of Edward the sixth. "*Tobalia et pecten ad pectinandum*" were ordered to be provided for the consecration of a bishop elect, in the Sarum pontifical. One of the earliest of these combs now known to exist is in the treasury of the cathedral of Sens, and said to be of the sixth century. Another, English and of the eleventh century, is in the British museum. It is carved in open work with men and interlacing scroll ornament. Unhappily, it is not perfect. A wood-cut is given on the next page of this very important ivory.

Another, richly carved with subjects from the gospels, is said to be preserved at Hardwick court, in Gloucestershire. Such ceremonial combs are often mentioned in church inventories and other ecclesiastical documents of the middle ages. Seven or eight are specified as belonging to St. Paul's cathedral in the year 1222 : three large, three small ; one "*pecten pulchrum*" the gift of John de

Chishulle ; and three others ; all of ivory. There were as many in the treasury of the cathedral of Canterbury, in 1315.

When the supposed tomb of St. Cuthbert was opened in 1827



it has been already said that there was found, among other relics deposited with the body of the saint, an ivory comb. This comb has a double row of teeth, divided by a broad plain band perforated in the middle with a round hole for the finger. In size it measures



six inches and a quarter by five inches. The historian of the proceedings on that occasion says that the comb is probably of the eleventh century, but he gives no reason ; and if the grave were really the grave of St. Cuthbert it is almost certain that the comb was his and used by him, ceremonially, as bishop.

The examples in the South Kensington collection were all made for private use, and the woodcut represents an Italian specimen, no. 2144. English family inventories from the fourteenth



to the sixteenth century, occasionally include combs of that kind. To name one only : the list of the effects of Roger de Mortimer at Wigmore castle, in the reign of Edward the second, specifies "j pecten de ebore."

One half only of the mirror cases, speaking generally, has been preserved. It is very rare to find both covers. Originally, the mirror was fastened to one side, and the other slid over it or was unscrewed. No example of both parts is in the South Kensington collection, and only one (it is believed) in the British museum. People, as time went on, probably thought that an unornamented side was not worth taking care of.

We find the subjects sculptured on mirror cases to be almost always scenes from domestic life, or from some poem or romance. Naturally it would be so. The only exceptions among all the

examples at South Kensington are two, on one of which is a representation of the Almighty Father and the dead Christ, on the other the message of David to Bathsheba. The rest, ten or twelve in number, have hunting and garden scenes, or players at chess, or assaults on the castle of Love. So it is also with the large collection of ivory mirror cases in the British museum.

The use of small mirrors is to be traced to the earliest historic period, and to be found among almost every people of the world. In the most ancient times they were commonly of metal; and it is believed that none, except of that material, has yet been found in any tomb of Egypt, or Greece, or Italy. These, unlike the mediæval mirror, had generally flat and broad handles, and the backs were often incised with various designs, mythological subjects, gods and goddesses, or from stories of the poets.

Many metallic mirrors have been found in Roman burial-places in England. Several are described in modern archæological publications; one especially curious, found in 1823 at Coddensham in Suffolk. This is important as an early example in respect of the smallness of its size and because it is enclosed in a case. It "is a portable trinket, consisting of a thin circular bronze case, divided horizontally into two nearly equal portions, which fit one into the other; and, being opened, it presents a convex mirror in each face of the interior." The diameter is scarcely more than two inches, and on one side is the head of the emperor Nero.

Anglo-saxon mirrors have seldom been found. Two, both discovered in a barrow near Sandwich, are engraved in the *Nenia Britannica*. Mirrors were nevertheless commonly used by ladies at that time; and there is a letter preserved in Bede from pope Boniface IV. to Ethelberga, queen of Edwin of Northumbria in 625, wherein he requests her acceptance of an ivory comb and a silver mirror. Combs and mirrors are frequent on the sculptured stones of Scotland; they occur on more than fifty, according to a table given in the preface to the admirable work published by



the Spalding club; and seven stones have representations of mirror cases.

Dr. Stuart in a short paper upon these sculptures, read before the International congress of pre-historic archæology in 1868, assigns to them a date not later than the seventh, eighth, or ninth century, and believes that the figures on the rude pillars may be of even an earlier date, before Christian times.

It is not known when glass covered at the back with lead was introduced in place of the earlier metallic mirror. Probably some of the cases which are in various collections were the covers of the new material. John Peckham, an Englishman, wrote in the middle of the thirteenth century a treatise on optics in which he speaks not only of steel mirrors but often of glass mirrors, and adds that when the lead was scraped off the back no image was reflected.

There is, or perhaps was 150 years ago, a curious coat of arms in a painted window of the fourteenth century, in the chancel of the church of Thame in Oxfordshire, on which was blazoned a mirror in a case with a handle attached to it. "He beareth *argent*," says Guillim in his Display of heraldry, "a tyger passant, regardant, gazing in a mirror or looking-glass, all *proper* . . . Some report, that those who rob the tiger of her young, use a policy to detain their dam from following them, by casting sundry looking-glasses in the way, whereat she useth long to gaze, etc."

Ladies using mirrors at their toilet frequently form a subject for illustration in fourteenth century manuscripts. These mirrors are precisely of the usual shape and size of those which have come down to us in ivory. Several may be seen in the manuscript romance of Lancelot du Lac in the British museum: in one, a lady lying on a couch holds the mirror in her hand whilst an attendant dresses her hair with a comb; in another, she herself uses both mirror and comb. A hundred years later the same design was engraved on one of a pack of cards, "*la damoiselle*," by "the Master of 1466," now in the national library at Paris.

Love scenes, as in the etching, or the siege of the castle of Love are subjects often found on mirror cases. The woodcut on this page is copied from an example at South Kensington, no. 1617. Another copy of the same romance of Lancelot, which has been just referred to, has an illumination of a real assault upon a castle, treated in a similar manner. Knights place ladders against the wall; the battlements are defended by the garrison; the attack is



made with cross-bows and a catapult; and men lie dead upon the ground. Another of much interest is given as "the twelfth battle" in the manuscript in the British museum so well known as queen Mary's psalter, written about the year 1320; in this, women look at the attack over the battlements of the town or castle.

Knights tilting, or a tournament, or ladies and gentlemen riding through woods and preceded by attendants with dogs, are also common subjects. The contemporary manuscripts illustrate the same design. Both on the mirror cases and in the illumina-



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III



IVORY CARVING, CIRCULAR MIRROR COVER. DATE 1300-1350. (SOLTIKOFF COLL.) DIAM 5 1/8 in.  
2 K.M. (N° 210 65)

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tions the lady is generally seen riding astride. Women are so represented more than once in the romance of Lancelot: for



example *fol. 120a*, and *163a*. A queen is riding, *fol. 181b*. In queen Mary's psalter, the treatment on the mirror cases of people riding is almost exactly repeated, *fol. 217*; again, *218b*, and *223b*.

Other examples may be seen in the Bodleian manuscript of the romance of Alexander, *fol.* 100 and 130. The same custom lasted in Lithuania until, at least, the year 1800.

There is one other ornamental design very common on mirror cases; people playing at chess or draughts. Margaret Paston writes in the reign of Richard the third to her husband, and says that at the Christmas following the death of lord Morley his widow would permit no amusements in her house, "non dysgysyngs ner harpyng ner lutyng—but pleying at the tabyllys and schesse." This brings us to an interesting and important class of carvings in ivory.

The date of the introduction of the games of chess and draughts into Europe, and more particularly among the northern nations and our own ancestors the Anglo-saxons, is a historical question upon which there has been great dispute. The game of chess was certainly played at a very early period in the east, and from thence probably passed through the Arabs into Greece. There are allusions to chess and chessmen in many writers before the twelfth century, and these incidental references are of more value than the positive assertions which later authors, after the manner of their day, did not hesitate to advance.

For example Caxton, or rather the author of the "Playe of the Chesse." "This playe fonde a phylosopher of thoryent whych was named in caldee Exerces, for which is as moche to say in englissh as he that lough Justyce and mesure." And this decision was not without due consideration of the matter; for just before we are told: "Trewē it is that somme men wene that this play was founden in the tyme of the bataylles and siege of troye. But that is not so. . . . After that cam this playe in the tyme of Alixaunder the grete in to egypt, and so unto alle the parties toward the south."

This treatise on chess is said to have been written nearly two hundred years before Caxton lived by Jacobus de Casulis, a French Dominican friar, about 1290. A copy is in the British



museum, MS. Harl. 1275; and it was printed at Milan in 1479.

Chaucer however, in "the Dreame," names not Exerces but Athalus as the supposed inventor of the game, in a passage worth quoting:

"Therewith Fortune saith, check here,  
And mate in the mid point of the checkere,  
With a pawne errant, alas,  
Ful craftier to playe she was  
Than Athalus that made the game,  
First to the chesse, so was his name."

We may, however, put aside the old guesses of early writers, for evidence still exists which sets at rest all doubt that chess was known and played in France in Carlovingian times, and we can understand easily, therefore, why mediæval poets and romance writers so often introduced stories about the game. Some ivory chessmen, six in number, were long preserved in the treasury of the abbey of St. Denis, and the old tradition was that they were given with the chess-table by Charlemagne himself. The greater number of the pieces and the table had been lost for many years, as long ago as 1600. The remainder, transferred at the revolution from St. Denis, are now in the public library at Paris. Sir Frederic Madden, in a very able and learned paper in the *Archæologia*, says of them: "The dresses and ornaments are all strictly in keeping with the Greek *costume* of the ninth century; and it is impossible not to be convinced, from the general character of the figures, that these chessmen really belong to the period assigned them by tradition, and were, in all probability, executed at Constantinople by an Asiatic Greek, and sent as a present to Charlemagne, either by the empress Irene, or by her successor Nicephorus. . . . One thing is certain, that these chessmen, from their size and workmanship, must have been designed for no ignoble personage: and, from the decided style of Greek art, it is a more natural inference to suppose them pre-

sented to Charlemagne by a sovereign of the lower empire, than that they came to him as an offering from the Moorish princes of Spain, or even from the caliph Haroun al Raschid, who gave many costly gifts to the emperor of the west."

In the East India museum almost a complete set of ivory chessmen is preserved, perhaps the most ancient examples now known to exist: older even than the chessmen from St. Denis. These were found about twenty years ago, mixed with a quantity of broken pottery, human bones, and other relics, amongst the ruins of some houses excavated on the site of the city of Brahmunabad in Sind, which was destroyed by an earthquake in the eighth century. The pieces are turned; plain in character, without ornament. Several are in a very fragile state, having perished in the same way as the Assyrian ivories; and an attempt should be made to restore, if possible, some of the lost substance. A few fragments of a chessboard were also found, incised with small circles, not interlacing. The chessmen and the squares of the board are black and white: ivory and ebony. The kings and queens are about three inches high; the pawns one inch; and the other pieces are of different intermediate heights. Coins were also found of the caliphs of Bagdad, about A.D. 750.

The mediæval chronicles, poems, and romances are full of references to the game. The anonymous author of the history of Ramsey monastery, writing about the year 1100, tells us that bishop Ætheric coming late one night to king Canute found him still playing chess, "*regem adhuc scaccorum ludo longioris tædia noctis relevantem invenit.*" Strutt quotes this passage in his sports and pastimes; and Sir F. Madden adds the following translation from a French manuscript of the thirteenth century. It is much to our present purpose, in illustration of the legends whence the subjects of mirror decorations were derived:—

"Orgar was playing at the chess,  
A game he had learned of the Danes;  
With him played the fair Elstrueth,  
A fairer maiden was not under heaven."



The story is of a mission from king Edgar to earl Orgar in the tenth century.

Chaucer again tells us how

"They dancen and they play at ches and tables ;"

and in the merchant's second tale he describes a chessboard :—

"So when they had ydyned, the cloth was up ytake,  
A ches ther was ybrought forth ; . . . .  
The ches was all of ivory, the meyne fresh and new,  
Ipulshid and ypikid, of white, asure, and blue."

A very curious passage occurs in a book originally written in French, in April 1371, and translated about the reign of Henry the sixth : a copy is in the British museum ; *Harl.* 1764. "There was a gentille knight's daughter that wratthed atte the tables with a gentill man that was riotous and comberous and hadd an evelle hede, and the debate was on a point that he plaide, that she saide that it was wronge : and so the wordes and the debate rose so that she saide that he was a lewde [ignorant] fole, and thane lost the game in chiding."

Chess-tables and chessmen are often specified in wills and inventories. The inventory of the effects of Sir Roger de Mortimer, referred to more than once, speaks of a coffer containing "j famil' de ebore pro scaccario ;" and among the jewels in the wardrobe book of Edward the first occur "una familia de ebore pro ludendo ad scaccarium," and "una familia pro scaccario de jaspide et cristallo." The "familia" in these entries is the same as the "meyne" in Chaucer's lines just above ; that is, the retinue, the company, or the set of domestics.

To quote from one will ; Sir William Compton in his will, dated 1523 bequeathed to Henry the eighth "a little chest of ivory whereof one lock is gilt, with a chessboard under the same, and a pair of tables upon it, and all such jewels and treasures as are enclosed therein."

The most complete set of ancient ivory chessmen now remaining was found in the isle of Lewis, in Scotland, about the year 1831, and most of them are now in the British museum. They are all of one character, similar to the accompanying wood-cut, which is engraved from another walrus-ivory chessman, also in

the British museum, and which was obtained some few years ago from a private collection.



It would be more proper to speak of the Lewis chess pieces as several sets, for there are some pieces enough for five or six. They are sixty-seven in number—six kings, five queens, thirteen bishops, fourteen knights, nineteen pawns, and ten (so-called) warders, which took the place of the modern rook or castle. This large collection was discovered by a labourer digging a sand-bank, and every piece is

accurately described in detail by Sir F. Madden in a paper read before the Society of antiquaries in 1832. They are all carved out of walrus ivory.

Upon this material Sir Frederic observes that "the estimation in which the teeth of the walrus were held by the northern nations rendered them a present worthy of royalty; and this circumstance is confirmed by a tradition preserved in the curious saga of Kröka the crafty, who lived in the tenth century." [The saga itself is believed to have been written in the fourteenth century.] "It is



there related, that Gunner, prefect of Greenland, wishing to conciliate the favour of Harald Hardraad, king of Norway (A.D. 1050), sent him the three most precious gifts the island could produce. These were, 1, a white bear; 2, a *chess-table*, or set of *chessmen*, exquisitely carved; 3, a skull of the Rostungr (or *walrus*) with the teeth fastened in it, and ornamented with gold." The best Icelandic scholars take the term *Tan-Tabl* in the sense of *chessmen made of the teeth of the walrus*.

Chessmen were occasionally made of considerably larger size. There is a good example of this kind in the South Kensington collection, no. 8987; and another, of which a woodcut is given, is in the British museum. This last remarkable piece was presented in 1856, by Sir Henry Cole.



Scarcely less common than chessmen are small round pieces, generally of the tusk of the walrus, which were used for a game probably like the modern game of draughts, and to which frequent allusion is found in mediæval books under the name of "tables." The mirror cases give us several representations of people engaged at this game, usually a lady and a gentleman. There seem to have been fewer pieces used than in our own days, and a smaller board or table. These draughtsmen are almost all of the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries; and the subjects men

and animals, with scroll ornament interlacing. Occasionally a single bird or a dragon fills the centre space.

Some of the decorations of the old church of Shobdon in Herefordshire (pulled down about 100 years ago) were similar to the carvings upon the draughtsmen and other works of that kind. These also were of the twelfth century. One pillar was ornamented with a series of small medallions tied together, exactly like the old draughtsmen. They are engraved, from fragments of three of the principal arches still preserved, in the first volume of the *Archæological journal*.

This style of ornament is shown to great advantage upon the arm of a chair of the eleventh or twelfth century, formerly in the Meyrick collection; carved from two tusks of the walrus. It is not easy to decide in what country this very important ivory was worked. One half of it is given in the accompanying wood-



cut. The name, arm of a chair, must be taken as a probable supposition. That it is one of a pair is apparently certain: for in the centre on one side is an eagle, on the other a winged lion; two of the four symbols of the Evangelists. These are deeply sunk and enclosed in ornamental borders, exactly similar to the draughtsmen of the same period. The sides from the centres to the ends are richly carved in admirable style and workmanship with an interlacing scroll ornament, in the midst of which are twined men and fabulous animals. The ends have, for terminations, the heads of lions designed with much spirit. On the under side, which is left perfectly flat, are incised some small crosses, composed of the well-known little circles called the bone ornament. There are other good examples of the same



style of decoration upon the specimens of the ancient Tau in the South Kensington museum. In all of these, though the men and animals are grotesque yet they have life and movement, and the foliage and branches with which they are twined and intermingled are well executed. The technical merit of the carving, deep in relief and often cut clear from the solid substance of the ivory, is very remarkable.



TWO GROUPS OF THE CHESSMEN FOUND IN THE ISLAND OF LEWIS.

## CHAPTER VIII.

ALTHOUGH it is impossible to enter in detail into any history of an object so well known, by name at least, as the pastoral crook of a bishop, it may yet be not without interest to offer a few remarks upon it in explanation of the varieties of shape of old ivory croziers still existing, and as a subject not without interest in our own days to many people. The Tau, spoken of in the last chapter, is but a form of the pastoral staff, adopted in more than one country of western Europe early in the middle ages.

The most ancient shape of the episcopal staff is found represented in the catacombs; a short handle, with a plain boss or oval knob bent aside at the top like the pagan *lituus*. Sometimes in the catacombs we also find the truer form of a shepherd's crook, a plain but complete curve at the extremity. The Tau is commonly seen and given without apparent distinction to bishops and abbots in manuscripts of the eighth and ninth centuries, about which period there came in another fashion, unpleasing and hardly intelligible in its design, where the crook is but slightly bent and extended almost horizontally from the staff itself. One more shape, and more rare, was a double plain crook like horns joined together. After all these came the admirable design, of which the South Kensington museum possesses one or two splendid examples, wherein the volute is carried half round again and frequently contains within the circle other ornaments or groups of figures.





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VII



IVORY CARVING, HEAD OF A TAU OR T SHAPED STAFF, IN WALRUS  
TUSK, THE COMPARTMENTS CONTAINING THE SIGNS OF THE  
ZODIAC. 12<sup>th</sup> CENT (SOLTIKOFF COLL) 1.5 IN. S.K.M. (N° 215'65)  
F.A. SLOCOMBE FECIT



The extremities of the Taus were often hollowed, to receive relics. The beautiful Tau now at Kensington, engraved in the etching, shows the old recesses; but the crystal ends are lost. It is of this Tau that a learned author writes as follows, in the *Mélanges archéologiques*:—"Avant de quitter ce beau monument, je ferai observer la riche ciselure du treillis séparant les signes. Il est à peine croyable que chaque petite perle d'ivoire le long des entrelacs enchâsse une pierre précieuse, et que les yeux des animaux sont ainsi formés." A very fine ivory of the same admirable kind and style is preserved in the library at Rouen, probably of earlier date, of the tenth century; and another is in the Cluny museum, unusually simple in shape and plain in ornament, which was found at St. Germain-des-Prés in the tomb of Morard, abbot of that monastery from 990 to 1014. In the etching is another Tau, also at Kensington.

Ivory Taus are of great rarity. They were gradually superseded towards the end of the twelfth century by that form which, with certain varieties of ornament, has continued down to our own times. The most common mode of treating the volute itself was to imitate a serpent; and the termination of the crook was the head of the serpent, sometimes with widely-expanded jaws.

It may appear unreasonable that the serpent was so constantly used as a religious emblem in such a way; but the symbol was certainly adopted in Christian art and with several pious significations from the first ages of the Christian faith. As the chief decoration of a bishop's pastoral staff it might be regarded as an emblem of prudence, or as a record of the rod of Moses, which was changed into a serpent and destroyed those which had been cast down by the magicians; or again, as an emblem of the subtlety or wisdom required in a ruler over Christ's flock. When the serpent is also chained or entangled, then, perhaps, the triumph of the Church over Satan is symbolised; or the contest itself between the two, when the head and open jaws seem to be on the point of closing over the lamb and cross, as in the pastoral

staff of the Ashmolean museum at Oxford. Once more, the triumph would be shown when our Lord in glory is represented within the sweep of the serpent's body. It is also probable that the men twisted and twined with serpents and animals and branches of trees, in the older examples, were meant to typify the struggle against the evil influences of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The triumph of Christianity over the world is of a class of ornament which was largely introduced towards the middle of the thirteenth century, and which included others of a like character : such as, especially, the Crucifixion (as in the etching) or the Virgin standing with the Child in her arms, sometimes attended by angels, or the adoration of the Magi; and, a little later, the coronation of the Virgin; or the destruction of the dragon by the archangel Michael.

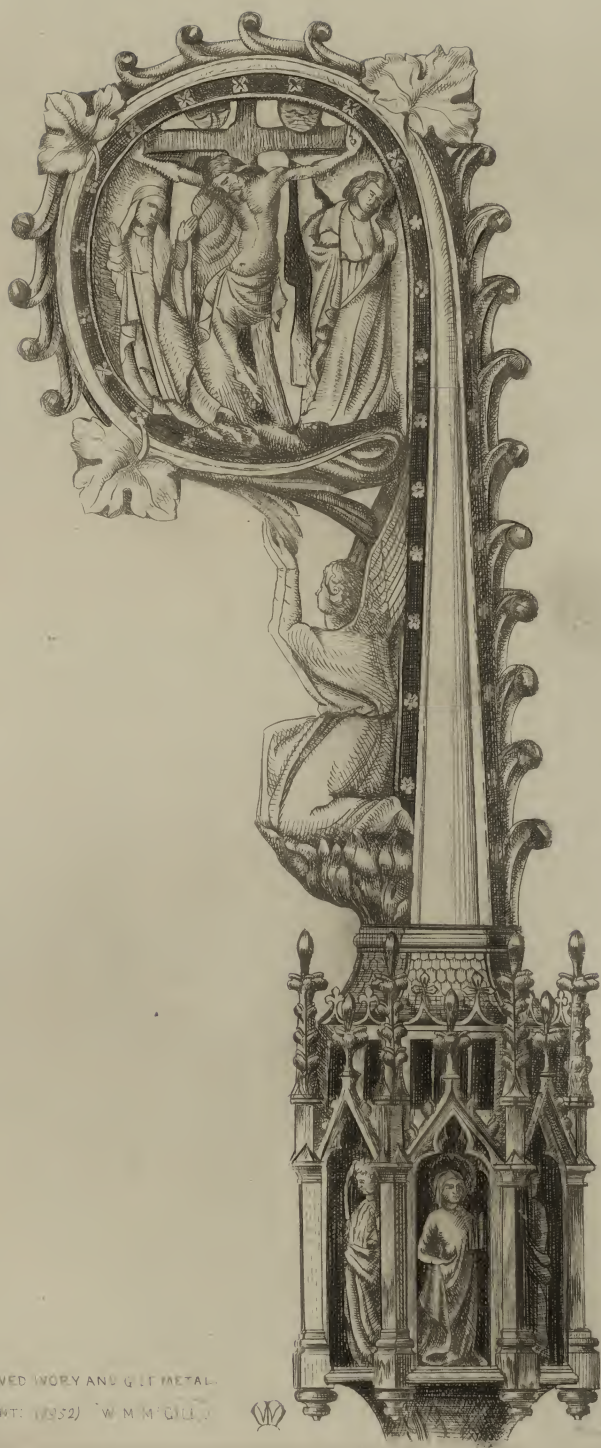
The author of the paper in the *Mélanges d'archéologie* speaks of a pastoral staff of ivory having "the Coronation" so early as the time of St. Gautier, abbot of St. Martin de Pontoise about 1070, to whom it is attributed. An engraving of it is in that publication; and it is worthy of especial notice because, although of wood, the handle is not only enriched with decorations like the handle of the fan at South Kensington, no. 373 and the corresponding piece in the British museum, but the ornaments are placed within exactly similar small square compartments.

Sometimes the volutes of croziers were filled merely with foliage and twisted branches; but these were more commonly of copper or silver, for the further purpose of being enamelled.

We must not fail to observe how cleverly in many of the mediæval ivory heads of bishops' staffs the volute is occupied by a double subject, placed back to back, so that one of the two might face the people as it was borne along. These are generally, on one side the Crucifixion, on the other the Virgin and Child. The figures standing upon the one side on either hand of the cross are carved on the reverse as angels in attendance on the



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CROZIER IN CARVED IVORY AND GILT METAL

FRENCH XIII CENT. (1352) W. M. M. GILL







Virgin. This is well shown in the woodcut, from a pastoral staff of the thirteenth century, preserved in the cathedral at Metz.



In remote times the pastoral staff of a bishop was usually made

of wood ; at least, we may suppose so from the jest of Guy Coquille :—

“ Au temps passé du siècle d'or,  
Crosse de bois, évêque d'or ;  
Maintenant, changeant les lois,  
Crosse d'or, évêque de bois.”

These lines are not, perhaps, all in jest, for the wooden staff of St. Erhard exists at Ratisbonne : and another is in the church of St. Ursula at Cologne. The two Benedictines in their famous travels (as recorded in the “*Voyage littéraire*”) come to Maurienne, and tell us : “*Nous vîmes aussi dans le trésor une croce d'ivoire : car les anciens évêques aimoient mieux employer leur argent à soulager les pauvres, qu'en des ornemens vains et superflus.*” They saw other ivory pastoral staffs before their journeys ended : one at Marseilles, in the abbey of St. Victor ; and one of the eleventh century at St. Savin, in the diocese of Tarbes ; another, worthy of special mention, at Cluny : “*La croce de S. Hugue, qui est de bois couvert de feuilles d'argent, dont le dessus est d'ivoire.*”

In later days the use of wood was generally limited to the staffs and croziers which were buried in their graves with archbishops and bishops, abbots and abbesses. A few of these have been found : one, very remarkable and in a fair state of preservation, in Westminster abbey in the tomb of bishop Lyndwood, the great canonist. This is now in the British museum. A full account of the opening of this tomb, with engravings, is printed in one of the volumes of the *Archæologia*.

Probably the pastoral staff mentioned in the will of Richard Martyn bishop of St. David's, who died about the year 1498, was of wood. He bequeathed to the church of Lyde “the cross-hed that Oliver the joiner made.”

Inscriptions are sometimes found upon ivory pastoral staffs. For example on that of St. Aunon, archbishop of Cologne : “*Sterne*



resistentes, stantes rege, tolle jacentes ;" others on those of St. Saturnin at Toulouse, and of Otho, bishop of Hildesheim.

The old Sarum pontificals order, in the first rubric for consecrating a bishop, that the *baculus pastoralis* should be provided with the other necessary episcopal ornaments and vestments ; and the staff is delivered to the new bishop in the course of the office. "*Quum datur baculus dicat ordinator, Accipe baculum pastoralis officii,*" etc., and the purpose is further alluded to as the ceremony proceeds.

The symbolism of the shape and ornaments of the ivory pastoral staffs is clearly explained by Hugo St. Victor : "Episcopo, dum regimen ecclesiæ committitur, baculus quasi pastori traditur, in quo tria notantur, quæ significatione non carent, recurvitas, virga, cuspis ; significatio hoc carmine continetur :—

"Attraho peccantes, justos rogo, pungo vagantes,  
Officio triplici servio pontifici."

It remains only to notice that the Pope uses neither pastoral staff nor crozier, nor is it delivered to him at his consecration, if at his election he be only a simple priest. It is said, however, that he should carry one in the diocese of Treves because St. Peter gave his own to the first bishop of that place, where it is preserved as a famous relic. This tradition is mentioned by St. Thomas Aquinas : "Et ideo in diœcesi Treverensi papa baculum portat, et non in aliis."

An engraving is given (p. 90) of the head of a pastoral staff, rather more than five inches in height, not only unusual and remarkable in style but probably of English work. This was preserved in the Meyrick collection and is carved from bone. The outside of the upright part and the volute are decorated with pierced work, now slightly mutilated. Inside the volute, which terminates with the open mouth of a serpent, is a man in a grotesque position, his feet within the serpent's jaws. A rich interlaced scroll decorates both sides of the head of the staff.

It is perhaps not to be wondered at that a Tau should be, as we know it is, amongst the most rare of ornaments or utensils in ivory which have been preserved. The early and total disuse of them would have naturally led to their destruction and loss, some-



times wilful, sometimes accidental. But that the pastoral staff (that is, the head of it) should be of almost equal rarity is less easily to be explained. Few collections possess a good example ; still fewer more than one. Nevertheless, in England alone pastoral staffs must have been almost without number at the beginning of



the sixteenth century; and although many were probably of metal, silver or copper enamelled and having some intrinsic value, yet an equal or perhaps greater number were of ivory. Not merely bishops but the heads of religious houses, abbots and abbesses, carried them as official tokens of their rank and dignity. We find frequent mention of them in the old inventories. For example, at St. Paul's, in 1295; "Item, baculus cum cambuca eburnea, continente agnum." "Item, baculus de peciis eburneis, et summitate crystallina," etc. "Cambuca" is a word often used in the middle ages for the staff itself; derived, perhaps, from κάμπτω, I bend.

Yet numerous as they must once have been, the heads of English pastoral staffs are now among the rarest of ivory carvings. It is true that no. 298 at South Kensington can, with some kind of probability, be attributed to an English artist and may have been used in England; but no other in that collection can be referred to. The almost complete destruction in England of all ecclesiastical ornaments—books, vestments, reliquaries, and the like—in the middle of the sixteenth century will account for the extreme rarity of them in this country. But it is very difficult to explain the reason why so few should still be found in France, or Germany, or Italy. The bishop's pastoral staff, again, has not dropped out of use like the pax or the flabellum.

There are examples of the pax in the South Kensington collection, nos. 246 and 247. It was used in the middle ages at high mass and sometimes at low mass also, for sending the kiss of peace from the celebrant, first to the deacon and subdeacon or to the acolyte, afterwards to the people. With regard to the custom in England, provincial and diocesan statutes repeat again and again the obligation upon parishes to provide the pax, "osculatorium" or "asser ad pacem," equally with the proper vestments or books or other furniture of the altar. The rubrics of the Sarum missal—the use most largely observed in England before the reign of queen Elizabeth—direct the priest, immediately after the *Agnus*

*Dei*, to kiss the outside rim of the chalice in which was the Sacred Blood, and then to give the pax to the deacon who delivered it in regular order to the ministers and choristers in the sanctuary.

Everything connected with the correct text of the plays of Shakespeare is of the highest interest to every Englishman; and will serve, it is hoped, as some excuse for a few words by way of remark upon a passage where he alludes to a pax. The unfortunate Bardolph came to an untimely end on account of it:

"Fortune is Bardolph's foe, and frowns on him:  
For he hath stolen a pax: and hang'd must'a be.  
—— Exeter hath given the doom of death,  
For pax of little price."

HENRY V., *act* iii., *sc.* 5.

Until lately the editors of Shakspeare printed *pyx* on the emendation (so-called) of Theobald. Johnson, who approved the new reading, informs us in his note upon the place that the two words "signified the same thing." As far as Bardolph was concerned it mattered not; he had "conveyed" a sacred thing and, as Holinshed tells us, the king would not move on till the thief was hanged.

The quartos of 1600 and 1608 (and also the three folios) read *pax*: "he hath stolne a packs;" "a packs of pettie price," in both editions. Shakspeare very well knew that a pax exposed or left carelessly on an altar was much more likely to be stolen than a pyx, which would be taken infinitely greater care of and locked up in the tabernacle. Even Dr. Johnson was ignorant upon some subjects; and the way in which editors "emend" their authors is something marvellous. When Shakspeare lived, and when the quartos were printed, people had not forgotten the distinction between the pax and the pyx; and many even could still remember when that now mysterious thing, the pax, had been brought down to them in the services of the Church from the altar.

The introduction of the pax instead of the old practice of mutual salutation was not until about the thirteenth century. The



earliest mention in England occurs in a council held at York, A.D. 1250, under archbishop Walter Gray, where it is called "osculatorium." A like order was made in the province of Canterbury, at the council of Merton, 1305, directing every parish to provide "tabulas pacis ad osculatorium." Several figures of the pax are given in works relating to the subject; and we find it almost always represented as part of the furniture of an altar in the woodcut which often precedes the service for advent sunday, in the printed editions of the Salisbury missal from about 1500 to 1557. Le Brun has an interesting disquisition on the pax: and he tells us in a note that in its turn it also fell into disuse, because of quarrels about precedence which were occasioned among the people. Le Brun is borne out by Chaucer who, in the Parson's Tale, speaking of the proud man explains that "also he awaited to sit, or els to go above him in the waie, or kisse paxe, or be encenced before his neighbour, etc."

Occasionally, paxes in ivory have inscriptions upon them. One of the three in the Liverpool museum has the appropriate prayer, "Da pacem Domine in diebus nostris." Two exhibited at Norwich in 1847 had legends. On one, the Annunciation, "Ave Maria;" on the other, the Nativity with the shepherds, "Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax, etc."

Notices of the pax are common in monastic and church inventories. In the Rites of Durham abbey we are told that they possessed "a marvelous faire booke, which had the epistles and gospels in it, the which booke had on the outside of the coveringe the picture of our Saviour Christ all of silver—which booke did serve for the paxe in the masse." A book which an abbot of Glastonbury gave to his church there probably answered the same purpose; and other then existing examples might be referred to. "Unum textum argenteum et auratum cum crucifixo, Maria, et Johanne, splendidus emalatum." A mediæval English pax made of wood does not now, probably, exist: but there is a curious entry in the inventory of church goods belonging to the

parish of St. Peter Cheap, in the year 1431; "item iij lyttel pax breds of tre." Many such wooden paxes are mentioned as having been burnt in the diocese of Lincoln in 1566 by the royal commissioners: "a paxe of wood" at Baston, another at Dunsbie, another at Haconbie.

We have a remarkable illustration of the late use of the pax in England in one of the injunctions issued by the king's visitors to the clergy within the deanery of Doncaster, in the first year of Edward the sixth, and printed by Burnet in his Records: "The clerk was ordered at the proper time to bring down the pax, and standing without the church door to say these words aloud to the people, This is a token of joyful peace which is betwixt God and men's conscience, *etc.*" The "church door" here means the door in the screen which in those days divided the chancel from the body of the church. As in Chaucer, where he says of the wife of Bath

"Husbands at the church door had she had five."

In England before the change of religion in the fifteenth century the marriage ceremony was performed outside the chancel, sometimes at the great door of the church itself; and then all proceeded towards the sanctuary for mass and communion.

One of the most beautiful as well as one of the most rare objects in the South Kensington collection is part of the handle of an ecclesiastical fan, or flabellum. It is, probably, one half of a handle; and another half, so nearly alike that it is a question whether it does or does not belong to the same handle, is in the British museum. The fan is still used in the Catholic Church in the east, where the purpose and benefit of it in order to keep off flies from the sacred vessels, or on account of the heat, are obvious. But in the west, except perhaps for part of the year in Italy, the fan was a kind of fashion and, having no symbolism, an unmeaning introduction from the oriental rite. The various



churches of France and England had dropped the use of it before the sixteenth century ; but we have plenty of evidence that the fan was commonly adopted in the thirteenth and the twelfth. Illuminations in two of the manuscripts in the public library at Rouen are very clear in this matter. One represents the deacon raising the flabellum, a circular fan with a long handle, over the head of the priest standing at the altar. In the other, the deacon is in the act of waving the fan, holding it by a short handle, over the head of a bishop who is elevating the Host.

A very curious flabellum, supposed to be of the ninth century, is described by Du Sommerard ; it had long been preserved in the abbey of Tournus, south of Chalons, and was said to be in the possession of M. Carraud about twenty years ago. The fan of queen Theodolinda, of purple vellum with ivory handle, given by her to the cathedral of Monza is still preserved there. Other examples are, perhaps, still existing ; two or three are mentioned by writers of the last century.

Inventories of churches and monasteries include the fan. In one of Amiens, about 1300, is "flabellum factum de serico et auro ad repellendas muscas." Another, of the Sainte Chapelle at Paris, 1363, gives "Item, duo flabella, vulgariter nuncupata muscalia, ornata perlis." Nor ought we to omit some entries of the same kind in English inventories. In one, of the cathedral of Salisbury, in 1314, are "ij flabella de serico et pergameno." The church of St. Faith, in the crypt of St. Paul's, possessed among its ornaments in 1298 "unum muscatorium de pennis pavonum." Still more to our present purpose was the fan given to a chantry in the cathedral of Rochester, by bishop Hanno, in 1346 ; "unum flabellum de serico cum virga eburnea:" or the "flabellum de serico" named in the inventory of the property of Robert Bilton, bishop of Exeter, in 1330. John Newton, treasurer of York minster, gave to that church about the year 1400 a splendid fan, which was in the treasury there when everything of the kind was destroyed by the commissioners of Edward

the sixth: "*Manubrium flabelli argenteum deauratum, ex dono Joh. Newton, cum ymagine episcopi in fine enameled, pond' v. unc.*" It is not at all improbable that fans were used in England at mass even in parochial or country churches until a late period. The following entry occurs in the accounts of the churchwardens of Walberswick, in Suffolk: a payment in the year 1493 for "a bessume of pekok's fethers, iv. d."

Care must be observed, however, not to set down all works in ivory which are similar to no. 373 as having been the handles of ecclesiastical fans. Other church ceremonies required utensils of the same kind; though, probably, they were seldom if ever so profusely decorated and enriched with carving. For example, holy-water sprinklers would often have had ivory handles; and one is specified as belonging to St. Paul's in 1295, "*aspersorium de ebore.*" More than this; whip handles, which we see on mirror cases and in illuminations, and other like things were made and ornamented for secular purposes. Hearne gives a copy of a curious inscription on the handle of a whip found in the ruins of the abbey of St. Alban. It commemorates the gift of four horses to the monks of that house from Gilbert of Newcastle. Hearne leaves the date of the handle doubtful, but is disposed to put it about the end of the fourteenth century.

The wife of Roger de Mortimer of Wigmore castle in Herefordshire had, among other valuable things as specified in the inventory taken in Edward the second's reign (before quoted) "*item, j scourgiam de ebore.*"

The etching represents a very beautiful reliquary, French work of the sixteenth century, in the Kensington museum.



SKM  
(18A)

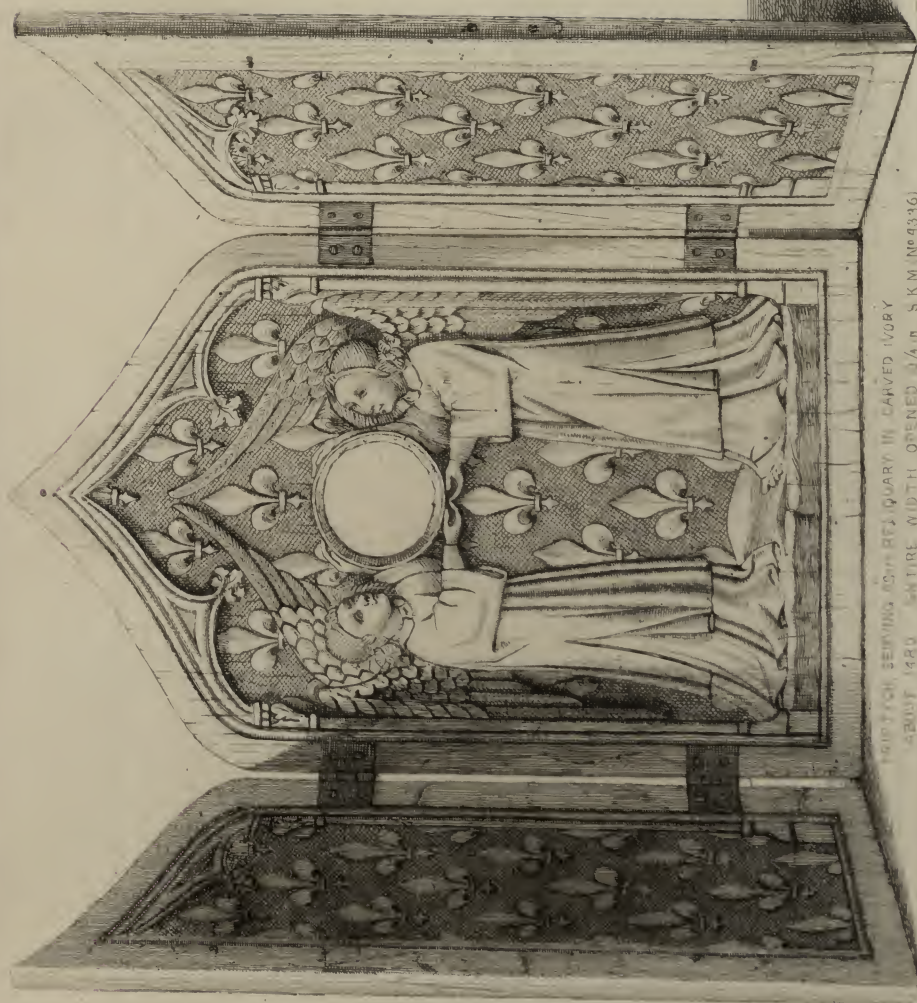


FIGURE 18A. ENTIRE WIDTH OPENED 3/4 in SKM (No 4336)

D JONES FECIT.





## CHAPTER IX.

THE South Kensington museum is rich in ivory statuettes : many of them are very beautiful, although none is equal to a large sitting figure of the Virgin in the British museum or to two or three of the finest in the collections at Paris. Almost all of these statuettes represent the Virgin and Child ; naturally, this would be a subject most frequently in demand for private oratories. Almost always the Virgin bears the tokens of her spiritual glory and privileges. To adopt the words of a French writer on another class of ivory carvings, "*La Vierge mère et reine porte glorieuse les trois signes de son incomparable grandeur ; la fleur de sa pureté immaculée, le fruit béni qui, loin de flétrir, a embelli sa fleur ; et la couronne qui a consommé ses privilèges en couronnant ses vertus.*"

Generally speaking, the statuettes of the latter part of the thirteenth and throughout the fourteenth century are pure and religious in style, with an admirable expression of love and reverence in the figures, perfectly natural. There are two or three examples in the collections at South Kensington and the British museum, which may well claim all the praise which M. Labarte gives to a group of the coronation of the Virgin and to a Virgin and Child, both now preserved in the Louvre. He speaks of the simplicity of the composition ; the refinement and truthfulness of the forms ; the appropriate inflexions of the body and limbs ; the imitation of real life ; the just expression given to the faces ;

and the natural development and treatment of the draperies. So, again, we may quote his exact words, and say of more than one statuette in these great collections: "Quelle pureté dans le dessin, quelle noblesse dans la pose, quelle finesse dans le modèle, quelle ampleur et quelle élégance dans la disposition de la draperie ! Cette statuette montre à quel haut degré de perfection était parvenue la sculpture chrétienne à la fin du [quatorzième] siècle."

The seals attached to mediæval deeds are important illustrations of the mode of treatment of the subject of the Virgin and Child, so common in the statuettes of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Take, for instance, some in the Bodleian library. The seal of the prior and convent of Wyrmeseye (Wormegay) in Norfolk, attached to a deed of 1347, has a seated Virgin suckling the Child, her right hand uplifted. Another of the convent of Castle Acre, 1290, a similar subject. Another, of one of the parties to a deed of the archbishop of Canterbury, 1376, has the Virgin sitting, facing, and holding the Child standing on her lap, a sceptre in her right hand ; another, showing the peculiar twist of the figure (presently to be noticed) is on the seal of the convent of West Acre, in Norfolk.

There are several also in the British museum : especially a very fine seal of Southwick Priory, early fourteenth century ; the Virgin sitting and suckling the Infant, under a canopy of a single arch ; another, the same subject, thirteenth century, of Oseney abbey ; another, same date, of Elsing Spittle priory, the Virgin standing with the child under a rich canopy.

Sometimes ivory statuettes are still found placed under canopies and with shutters or wings to fold round them, so as either to make shrines for an oratory or, portable, to be carried by the owners on their journeys. More often, examples of this kind are not finished in the back or are still left attached to the ground of the block of ivory, carved however in very high relief. The shrine no. 4686, is a good specimen. When so treated, the shutters are richly decorated on the inside with scenes from the



gospels, usually relating to the Nativity or to the Passion of our Lord.

Of this style were the shrines or triptychs at Lincoln, in 1536: "A tabernacle of two leaves, gemmels [hinges] and lock of silver, containing the coronation of our Lady;" and "item, a tabernacle of ivory standing upon four feet with two leaves, with one image of our Lady in the middle, and the salutation of our Lady in one leaf, and the nativity of our Lady in the other."

There are two remarkable and important illuminations in the manuscript psalter of queen Mary, which has been more than once referred to (p. 74). In one is a shrine, open, with the decorations usual early in the fourteenth century. The centre is divided into two compartments. Above is the Annunciation; the Blessed Virgin and an angel; each under a pointed arch, cusped and crocketed. Below, is the Visitation; Elizabeth and the Virgin meet under a gateway and embrace. The wings are filled with saints, each standing under a pointed arch. This illumination precedes the psalter, following the calendar, after the Old Testament history. The other represents a triptych: in the middle is the Virgin and Child; she is sitting and giving Him the breast; two angels stand by, swinging censers; in each wing is an angel with a candlestick.

The mediæval artist may have drawn these with examples now in the South Kensington museum before him as his models.

Figures carved in such deep relief as almost to be statuettes occasionally but very rarely occur in diptychs. A remarkable specimen was in the Meyrick collection; an illustration is given (p. 100) of one of the leaves. Probably no diptych exists in any collection equalling this in the depth to which the figures have been cut in relief. Each is brought out from the background three quarters of an inch. On the other leaf is the Virgin and Child. An inscription is incised upon the book which our Lord holds in His left hand: "Ego su. dns. ds tuus Ic. xpc. qī. creavi redemi & salvabo te." Both figures have great grace and

dignity; and the draperies are arranged with unusual simplicity and breadth.

There was also another very curious mode of carving statuettes



of the Virgin, of which extant specimens are extremely rare, and none (it is believed) is to be found in England. There is one, well known, in the gallery of the Louvre, engraved in the useful book of M. Viollet le Duc, *dictionnaire de mobilier Français*. It is a sitting figure of our Lady, who is holding the Infant on her knees. The front part is divided down the middle and two wings fall back on hinges, leaving a centre-piece and forming a triptych of the usual character. There are scenes from the Passion on the wings, and the Crucifixion is carved upon the centre. The date of the ivory is early in the fourteenth century; but the fashion of this kind of statuette can be traced to a much earlier time. An entry in an inventory of the church of Notre Dame at Paris in 1343 mentions one: "quædam alia ymago eburnea valde antiqua

scisa per medium et cum ymaginibus sculptis in appertura, que solebat poni super magnum altare."

Occasionally statuettes are mentioned in English inventories; thus in the inventory of Roger de Mortimer, a coffer is included, containing with other things "j parvam imaginem beatæ Virginis



de ebore." Again, "a lityll longe box of yvery with an ymage of our lady of yvery therein closyd" is named among the goods belonging in 1534 to the guild of St. Mary the Virgin at Boston, in Norfolk.

A very fine statuette of English work, more than nine inches in height, has been for some years on loan to the South Kensington museum; it belonged to the late Mr. Hope Scott, and was formerly Lord Shrewsbury's. The Virgin is in a sitting position and holds a large flower in her right hand. She wears a crown under which is the veil, and her drapery falls over her knees to the feet in heavy and deeply-carved folds. The face of the Virgin is very beautiful and full of affectionate expression; the head also of the Child is unusually good. The ends of the throne are carved in relief, each with a figure of a female saint sitting under a bold decorated canopy. Many portions of the original gilding remain upon the hair and on the borders of the vestments.

The largest known statuette was in the possession of the late Mr. Alexander Barker; and this is not only remarkable for its size and height but is graceful in design, and from the hand of a good artist. It is French, probably of the Burgundian school, and of the fourteenth century. The Blessed Virgin is standing, carrying the Child; both hold in one hand a fruit, perhaps an apple. The figures are vested much in the same manner as the statuette no. 4685 at South Kensington, and the draperies have gilded borders with a running scroll; the linings of the robes of both are painted dark blue. The hair of the Virgin and of the Infant has been gilded. The perpendicular height of this statuette is twenty-three inches, and the extreme width at the base six inches. The figure is hollow as far as the tusk was so, and slopes to the left in accordance with its natural growth. The height to the girdle is fifteen inches, and the Infant sitting on His mother's arm measures seven and a half inches. From the chin to the top of the head of the Virgin is three inches. The tusk curves inwards at the waist two inches from a line falling from the back of

the head to the lowest part of the drapery which covers the feet.

Every one must have remarked the bend or twist so often given to statues, carved from stone, of the Virgin and of female saints which fill the niches of churches and cathedrals built in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The necessity which obliged the workman in ivory to follow the natural form of the tusk in all statuettes of such a size, or of nearly so great a size, as that which has been just described, certainly did not press upon sculptors whose material was stone and comparatively unlimited. But the position had perhaps become, as it were, a fashion, and the style conventional and pleasing to eyes accustomed daily to see statues so leaning aside in their own oratories.

The same slope or twist is to be seen often in the figure of the Virgin in the centre of the volute of the head of a pastoral staff; where, so far as abundance of material was concerned, there was not the least necessity for any deviation from an upright into an unnatural attitude.

Again, in statuettes in silver or other metal: as, for example, in the silver Virgin and Child in the South Kensington museum; and in another, also silver, standing on the cover of an oblong reliquary, and said to represent Jeanne d'Evreux, queen of France. This last is among the collections of the Louvre.

Before we pass on to another question, it is impossible not to make a few remarks upon one of the most beautiful and affecting of all the works in ivory which have come down to us from mediæval times. This is a piece, small in size and carved upon both sides, which has probably been in the volute of a bishop's pastoral staff. On one side is a group of our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, praying in His agony, and with the apostles lying asleep below. On the other is a second group, a Pietà; the blessed Virgin seated and holding the dead body of our Lord upon her lap. A woodcut is given of this important sculpture.

Perhaps there are few works of Michael Angelo which have



been more praised, or which have excited more enthusiasm than his group of the same subject in St. Peter's. We will listen for a minute to two or three writers who have especially drawn attention to his famous Pietà.

One says: "The celebrated Pietà now adorns the first right-hand chapel on entering the great door of St. Peter's. It consists of two figures, the Virgin Mother, seated in a dignified attitude, and supporting on her knees a dead Christ, Whom she



regards with inexpressible reverence, tenderness, and grief. . . . Its touching pathos, its dignified conception, and its masterly execution, are incontestable."

A French critic writes: "Cette Pietà fut la première œuvre de Michel Ange qui l'éleva au premier rang et apprit son nom à tous les échos du monde civilisé;" and the same author further speaks of the group as having been "the conception" of the artist, and "a creation" of his imagination.

Another writes: "When this group was finished it was universally admired," and goes on to state that "one of the great sculptors of the present day, our fellow-countryman Gibson, expressed himself in terms of high admiration."

Once more; a writer upon the Tuscan school: "In this admirable group the dead body of our Lord lies upon the lap of the Madonna, while her left hand is half opened and slightly turned back, with a gesture which carries out the pitying expression of her face. The Christ shows a purity of style and deep feeling, combined with a grandeur which Michel Angelo drew

from himself alone." The same writer tells us a few pages before : " Michael Angelo, who was an enemy to tradition in art, as well as to a positive imitation of nature, took a path diametrically opposed to that followed by the conventionalists, the realists, and the worshippers of the antique."

We entirely dissent from the unmeasured laudation here given to the famous statue at St. Peter's. Let the praise of originality of conception, as well as of merit of execution (so far as the size of his material would permit) be given where it is due, to the sculptor of the fourteenth century, who died a hundred years before Michael Angelo was born. Nay, more than this ; an unprejudiced comparison will show that where the work of the great Italian differs from the earlier Pietà, it differs for the worse. In the ivory the position of the head and the cold stiffness of the limbs are more death-like and more solemn than in the marble. In the ivory also the Mother seems to be thinking more of the past pains and sufferings of her Divine Son than of her own sorrows : tenderly she supports the Saviour's head with her right hand, and, as it were, still clings to Him and draws Him to her with the other ; not, as in the marble at Rome, stretching out and opening her hand as if to show *her* misery and the terrible extent of *her* bereavement. The mediæval artist remembered that the sad cry of the prophet in the book of Lamentations referred not to His mother but to Christ : " Was there ever any sorrow like unto my sorrow ? "

It was a common practice in the middle ages to colour statuettes and, indeed, also other things, such as triptychs, diptychs, and the covers of writing-tablets. Traces of this colouring are still visible on many examples. The robes and vestments were painted red or blue, with borders of a different colour and often diapered with patterns in gold. The interesting illustration (opposite) of a painter at work upon a statuette, an illumination in a French manuscript of the fifteenth century, is copied from M. Labarte's work on the industrial arts.



Modern taste runs generally, with regard to this question, in opposition to the old ; but we are not, therefore, hurriedly to decide against colour as altogether barbarous or improper.

Sculpture, people thought in former days, gained an improved effect by such additional help, and certainly the use of colour was an attempt to give a more real appearance and more true to nature. The carvers in ivory could moreover (if they had known the fact) have appealed to the best



period of the Greek school ; to the works of Phidias and Praxiteles. The chryselephantine statues in the temples of Athens and Olympia had the same character of ornament and variety of material.

Writers on art who hold that the legitimate province of sculpture is simply to represent by form are inclined to condemn any addition of colour as interfering with that definition. They say that if sculpture be painted it is a mixture of two arts : as it is also if a picture be relieved or raised in any part ; after the manner of the Byzantine pictures by Italian painters of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. But it by no means follows that such a mixture is necessarily false in taste ; rather it must be left to the judgment and decision of the time and of the country for which the sculptures are made.

A recent contributor to an art periodical, writing of imitation

of nature in statues by colour, dogmatizes without doubt or hesitation and even goes so far as to say that such statues are "not to be regarded as sculpture. Nor can those representations of the human form which are made to counterfeit life itself, and dressed it may be in the actual attire of the person portrayed, be spoken of as sculpture. Regarded from the sculptor's point of view, such productions can only be regarded in the light of tricks, or, at the best, of clever forgeries of nature." Criticism such as this seems to want the right quality of discretion.

Although it is quite true that the works of the Greek sculptors, during the two or three hundred years of the greatest perfection to which the art of sculpture has ever reached, are not to be praised as the greatest and most successful of all statues because they were coloured or otherwise made to imitate reality; yet the intention was good, and in obedience to the universal demand and feeling of a people wonderfully fitted by nature, education, and experience to come to a right conclusion on the matter. We are unaccustomed in our own days to statues except those which, whether draped or undraped, are left in the original pure whiteness of the ivory or marble; we think that nothing is to be so much approved as what we call simplicity. We may be right, not only as to what we hold to be pleasing to ourselves, but as to what ought to be pleasing to and held to be correct by every one and in every age. On the other hand, we may not be right after all; and a little more caution and hesitation might be advisable before we condemn, merely as a matter of abstract taste, a practice which seems to have recommended itself to almost every people of the world, as in some way in accordance with the common sentiment of humanity itself; which was accepted by highly civilised nations from the days of the Egyptian and Assyrian kings down to the fifteenth century of the Christian æra; and which can appeal in its support to artists whose works have ever been acknowledged to be the masterpieces of the world.

It has just been said that the great works of Phidias and his



pupils are not to be praised merely because they were coloured nor because no mode of enrichment, gold or jewels or ivory or enamelling, was grudged as being too costly in order to adorn them. So, again, the use of colours is not to be condemned because the statues of some very ancient nations are coarse and rude, or because the idols of the old Mexicans or of the savages of Africa and New Zealand are made by it even more hideous than they would otherwise be. The wide-spread observance of the practice is the point to be considered; and the fact that it rests upon some deep-seated and universal feeling in the mind of all men, of all countries, and of almost every age.

Regarded as a mode of handing down to future generations the memory of much which would have been lost for want of it, who can complain of the careful colouring of mediæval tombs and monuments? We are indebted to it for exact details of dresses and jewelry and armour: about which there can therefore be no longer any dispute, and which give the answer at once to many difficulties and many interesting subjects of inquiry. Nowadays we should almost shudder at a statue painted and coloured to imitate the muslins and silks worn in Hyde Park by women, and the various coats and trowsers of the men. But five hundred years hence some of our descendants would be grateful if, in spite of our own prejudices, we had given them even one statue among the many of our Queen or of the prince Consort, not left in the bare uncoloured silence of the marble.

Crucifixes in ivory of the middle ages are extremely rare; they may remain still in use in some churches abroad, but whether abroad or at home they are seldom found in the collection of any museum. There is one, although a fragment yet very beautiful, in the South Kensington collection: no. 212. The figure is represented after death; but the still suffering expression of the drooping head, the strained muscles across the breast showing the ribs, and, as it were, the struggle of the legs contracted in the last agony, are admirably given. The eyes are closed, the forehead

drawn with pain, the mouth open. The body is clothed with a garment crossed in white folds over the loins and falling to the knees. It is greatly to be regretted that this beautiful figure has been so mutilated. The conception of the artist is full of true feeling and devotion, and his treatment of the subject an excellent example of the right union of conventionality with enough of what is real. As with regard to the heads of pastoral staffs, so also it is not easy to say why mediæval crucifixes should be so uncommon: for, although there must have been hundreds wilfully destroyed and broken in England in the sixteenth century, the same reason does not apply to other countries, where the demand and the supply both for the churches and for private use must have been continual and almost without limit.

There are numerous records still remaining in our public offices and in the muniment-rooms of many dioceses, which leave us in no doubt as to the extent and completeness of the destruction of the furniture and goods of English churches and cathedrals from the year 1550 to 1570. In the very valuable series of returns made by the commissioners for the county of Lincoln, the lists of items are generally summed up, "with the rest of the trash and tromperie wch appertaynid to the popish service." Even with respect to objects for which one would have supposed that some slight reverence would have still been felt, such as crucifixes and altars, we have entries like the following in one parish alone: "Item ij altar stones; which is defacid and layd in high waies and sarveth as bridges for sheepe and cattall to go on;" in another, "Item, iij altar stones broken and defacid, thone [the one] solde vnto Thomas Woodcroft, who turned it to a cestron bottom, thother aboute the mending of the church wall and the thirde sett in a fire herthe."

An unusually good and large ivory crucifix is preserved in the Catholic chapel in Spanish Place, London. It was given to the chapel about thirty years ago but for some time retained by the late cardinal Wiseman, by whose permission it was shown in the



Great Exhibition of 1851. The date is, perhaps, late in the seventeenth century; Spanish work; about a foot in height; and the arms of the suspended body are less extended than in the mediæval times. The figure is coloured with great care to imitate life; blood flows from the wounds, and the streams where they meet are jewelled with small rubies. The flesh of the knees is broken and mangled.

Excellent as this crucifix is as a mere work of art, it utterly fails in calling forth expression of pure religious sentiment. The reality of treatment in the figure of our dying Lord is too near truth, and is at the same time untrue. So far as it has left the old type it has lost power to influence devotion. The earlier conventional crucifix, which left all to the imagination and never aimed at perfectly representing a man dying on a cross, was immeasurably more fitting and more reverential.

The diptychs of the middle ages for public and private devotion have been already spoken of. But besides these, two leaves occur not unfrequently which are strictly diptychs and were used for the same purpose as the *pugillares* in the old days of imperial Rome. Single plaques are very common, and not only are they usually small in size but may almost always be distinguished from diptychs of the religious class by the form of the reverse or inside page of each leaf. This has been hollowed out to a slight depth, leaving a narrow raised rim or border; and wax was spread over the depressed portion, for writing upon with a pointel or stylus; the other end of which was flattened to erase with. We thus find brought down through fifteen hundred years the practice of the days of Ovid:

“Et meditata manu componit verba trementi;  
Dextra tenet ferrum, vacuam tenet altera ceram.  
Incipit, et dubitat: scribit, damnatque tabellas:  
Et notat, et delet, etc.”

The subjects sculptured on the outside of diptychs of this kind generally also give another and a sufficient distinction, being

perhaps some domestic scene or a story from a romance, as upon combs or mirror cases. But this is not always so: for writing-tablets occasionally are found with subjects taken from the Holy Scriptures.

A few examples of these writing-tablets have been preserved which have several leaves of ivory inside; although in most instances the plain leaves have been lost and the covers alone remain. A very fine and complete set, of the fourteenth century, with four inner leaves is engraved by Montfaucon (in his great work *L'Antiquité expliquée*) from his own collection, which had scenes carved on it from the romance of Alexander. Montfaucon describes them carefully: "Notre cabinet en a de cette dernière matière (d'ivoire), dont les deux couvertures ont des bas-reliefs d'un goût barbare. Les bords des tablettes sont relevez de tous les côtez: ces bords relevez laissent un petit creux pour y placer une cire préparée, laquelle élevant un peu le page rendoit une face unie et de niveau avec les bords; on appelloit ces tablettes *tabellæ ceratæ*. On gravoit sur cette cire préparée ce qu'on vouloit écrire, et l'on effaçoit ce qu'on avoit écrit, ou en y passant fortement dessus l'autre côté du style, quand la matière étoit plus gluante. C'est ce que les anciens appelloient *stylum vertere*, etc." Judging from the engraving in Montfaucon's own book, it would seem that these tablets were the work of a good artist and of the best time of that particular style; and that it was hard to speak of them as "d'un goût barbare."

Ivory writing-tablets were used in the middle ages in England by people of all ranks, and are mentioned in inventories and wills. Chaucer tells us of the preaching friar's companion:

"His felaw had a staff tipped with horn,  
A pair of tables all of ivory,  
And a pointel ypolished fetishly,  
And wrote alway the names, as he stood  
Of alle folk that gaue hem any good—  
—Or geve us of your braun, if ye have any,  
A dagon of your blanket, leve dame,  
Our suster dere, lo here I write your name."



A characteristic illustration occurs in Shakespeare, in the second part of King Henry the fourth. The archbishop of York says :

‘ . . . the king is weary <sup>2</sup>  
Of dainty and such picking grievances ;  
And therefore will he wipe his tables clean,  
And keep no tell-tale to his memory.”

It is to be observed that in these quotations both Chaucer and Shakespeare call these diptychs by the name “tables,” a word which had several meanings formerly in England. We have seen already that the game of draughts was so called, and it was also frequently applied in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to carvings in alabaster or to paintings on boards in churches. In 1458 money was bequeathed to the church of Dunwich in Suffolk, “ad novam tabulam de alabastro de historia sanctæ Margaretæ,” and a “table of St. Thomas of Ynde” was left in 1510 by Robert Clerk to Batfield church, in Norfolk.

An interesting paper in the *Archæologia*, read before the Society of antiquaries in 1843 by Mr. Albert Way, on the famous golden *Tubula* of Basle may also be referred to. The writer concludes by expressing his wish that such a monument, then in private hands, “could be deposited in a national collection,” and he complains that “England alone, of all the countries of western Europe, possesses no national collection which exhibits a series of specimens illustrative of the character and progress of the arts of the middle ages, and of the taste and usages of our ancestors.” Happily, this is a complaint which cannot be made now.

Chaplets of ivory beads for private devotion were very common in the middle ages, and are often mentioned in letters and other documents. Some good examples still exist in various collections. The woodcut on the next page represents a set, and a girdle with ivory clasps, in the collection of M. Achille Jubinal.

Another class of small works in ivory was to be found in England from an early period, namely seals. Some have been



CARVED IVORY CHAPLET OF BEADS AND GIRDLE OF AN ABDESS: SIXTEENTH CENTURY.



preserved. One is in the Ashmolean at Oxford; oval, of the archdeaconry of Merioneth, in the thirteenth century; another, walrus ivory, of the abbey of St. Alban is in the British museum.

Robert Fabyan the chronicler, in his will dated 1511 leaves to one of his sons "that other signet of gold, with my puncheon of ivory and silver."

There are several very fine horns in the South Kensington collection, more especially no. 7954, engraved in the accompanying woodcut, and which is unequalled by any other of its kind



known. The style and workmanship are rare; one, probably by the same hand, was lately in the possession of a noble English family. The horns which we find frequently mentioned in mediæval wills and inventories are hunting horns. For example, Sir John de Foxle in 1378 leaves to the king his great bugle horn, ornamented with gold. "The ivory horn of St. Oswald the king" was preserved at Durham in the year 1383. Near the end of the thirteenth century there were two ivory horns kept in the treasury of St. Paul's: "Item, cornu eburneum gravatum bestiis et avibus, magnum. Item, aliud cornu eburneum planum et parvum."

A common term anciently in England for these horns was "olifant," from the name then usually given to the elephant; for instance, the amusing story in the old life of St. Clement in Caxton's Golden Legend: "When Barnabe came to Rome prechyng y<sup>e</sup> fayth of Jesu Christ, the philosophers mocked hym and despysed hys predicacyon and in scorne put to hym this questyon sayenge, What is y<sup>e</sup> cause y<sup>e</sup> culex whyche is a lytell beest hath

vj. feet and two wynges and an olyphaunte whyche ys a grete beest hath but foure feete and no wynges," etc. St. Barnabas replied that it was a foolish question and needed no answer—the more especially as they knew not the Creator and must necessarily, therefore, be ignorant about his creatures.

There is only one horn at South Kensington which can be regarded as having been a tenure horn. It is possible that no. 7953 (see the etching) may have been a horn of that kind. Several of these tenure horns are still preserved in England and were shown in the loan exhibition of 1862. Among them the most famous are the horn of Ulphus, in the treasury at York; the horns given by Henry the first to the cathedral at Carlisle; and the Pusey horn. The ivory hunting horn (so-called) of Charlemagne is kept at Aix la Chapelle; and another said to have been Roland's in the cathedral at Toulouse.

It will be observed by those who examine the catalogue of the ivories in the South Kensington museum that more are attributed to the fourteenth century than to any other, and this would be correct with regard also to the collection in the British museum, or at Liverpool, or abroad. Sculpture in ivory was very general and greatly patronised at that time; and, with the exception of a very few examples of Roman art under the emperors, there are no carvings existing which equal those made from about the year 1280 to 1350, either in truth and gracefulness of design or in excellence of workmanship.

We find also in carvings of that period the best examples of the very beautiful open or pierced work which has been already spoken of: and an illustration has before been given (p. 64) from a series of small panels in the Meyrick collection. No apology will be required for adding here two more woodcuts from ivories of the same character. Both are engraved of the exact size of the originals.

One of these contains two compartments from the splendid plaque, no. 366, in the South Kensington collection.





SKM  
(37)  
VII

IVORY OR ELEPHANT IVORY BYZANTINE 11<sup>th</sup> CENT.  
15 IN DIAM 5 1/2 IN (SOLTIKOFF, COLL. S. K. M. (No 7953-62)  
A. A. BRADBURY. FECIT.







The other is a complete row from a book cover in the British museum : divided into thirty compartments, each an inch by three quarters of an inch. It is impossible in a woodcut to do



more than attempt to give some idea of the marvellous delicacy and excellence of the panel itself, which is beyond all comparison the very finest ivory existing of its peculiar school. Small, even minute, as the divisions are, they plainly tell the story which each



is intended to convey; although in some of them there are as many as seven or eight figures, finished with admirable distinctness and perfection. The subjects in this row are the offering of St. Joachim; his departure into the desert; the message of the angel to St. Joachim; the message to St. Anne; the meeting of St. Joachim and St. Anne at the gate; and the birth of the Blessed Virgin. The etching represents some beautiful panels in open work, at South Kensington.

Nothing is more difficult than the determination of the particular country in which many of the ivories of mediæval times were carved. All acknowledge this, and they the most readily who have had the widest experience and the best opportunities of examination. It has long been a custom to set down almost every ivory of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as Flemish or French, leaving but few except the Italian marriage caskets to the credit of other countries. But (not to speak of Germany) there can be no question that carvings in ivory were then much sought after and bought in England, and that there must have been numerous English artists. Two unquestionable examples of the English school of the fourteenth century are in the British museum: a triptych which was carved for Grandison, bishop of Exeter; and one leaf of a diptych which was also made for the same great prelate, and still retains slight traces of the painting of his coat of arms. A woodcut is given (p. 117) of the single leaf. Generally, we may agree with Sir Digby Wyatt, who says in the very interesting and able lecture to which reference has been already made (p. 5), that "a peculiar *nez retroussé*, a dimpled, pouting, and yet smiling mouth, a general *gentillesse* of treatment, and a brilliant yet rapid mode of technical execution, stamp the French work with an almost unmistakable character. To the English style may be assigned a position midway between the French and the second Italian manner. It does not exhibit the gaiety and tenderness of the former, nor has it quite the grandeur of the latter, but it is marked by a sober



SKM  
(23)  
VII



PLAQUES OR PANELS OF A CASKET, ONE A FRAGMENT, IVORY. FRENCH. 14<sup>th</sup> CENT.  
S.K.M. (N° 284 342'67).  
F.A. SLOCOMBE FECIT.





earnestness of expression in serious action which neither of those styles possesses." We may further observe that the English school had less of the monotony and mannerism which are the derogatory features of continental examples of the same period ; in fact, English gothic ivories have both a purity and a variety of treatment on a par with the admirable characteristics of contemporary architecture in this country.

The names of mediæval artists in ivory are almost entirely unknown. Sir Digby Wyatt and Labarte say that they have been able to meet with the name of one only, that of Jean Lebraellier, who was carver to Charles V. of France, and is mentioned in the inventory of that monarch as having executed "*deux grans tableaux d'ivoire des troys Maries.*" We may venture to add the name of one other, the carver of a pax in the British museum, Jehan Nicolle ; whose work, unlike the "tables" of Lebraellier, fortunately still exists. His name is



incised upon the pax in capital letters ; there is also a shield, bearing a hammer behind two crossed swords.

Very few Spanish ivories of the middle ages can be referred to, and those which we possess have a very distinct Moorish or Arabic character about them. They are generally caskets or boxes (see the etching), and some are still to be found in the treasuries of churches in Spain. Strangely enough, it is said that there are more remaining in the north and north-west of Spain, where the Moors did not obtain any permanent footing, than in the south ; in Andalusia or Granada. Probably this is owing not only to the circumstance that when taken to other parts of the country they were regarded as valuable curiosities, but also more especially because of the natural prejudice in the south against keeping works of Moorish art and manufacture as reliquaries or pyxes, or for any religious use. In the north of Spain there seems to have been no obstacle in the way of enclosing relics of a Christian saint in coffers upon which Arabic inscriptions had been carved in honour of Allah and his prophet. But we must remember that these inscriptions were in an unknown language.

Some of the ancient Spanish ivories are as old as the days of the Cordovan caliphs in the ninth and tenth centuries ; a fact which we are now able to decide from the Arabic inscriptions. But where such evidence is wanting there is scarcely any guide to direct us in fixing the date : the ivories may have been carved at almost any time down to the conquest of Granada by Ferdinand and Isabella. Moorish art, like the Egyptian or Chinese, changed but little from age to age ; the old process and the old patterns were handed down, unaltered, from father to son ; and ivory carvings may have been made in various parts of Spain by Moorish workmen as late even as the end of the sixteenth century.

It can scarcely be out of place, before we end, to add one word of warning with regard to forgeries of ivory carvings. These are sometimes so well done that even experienced persons might be deceived. Generally, the period chosen for imitations is what





CARVED IVORY BOX, WITH ARABIC INSCRIPTION. HISPANO-MOESGO. H. 3. DIAM: 4 IN.  
ABOUT 961. S.K.M. (Nº 217, 65.)

M. SULLIVAN FEGT.

12  
S.K.M.  
(24)  
III





is commonly called the Carlovingian, or a little earlier; for not only are genuine pieces rare and valuable, but being often coarse and rude in style are more easily to be executed. Forgeries of consular diptychs have been frequently made; and with regard to one of these it is well to place on record the following facts which have been kindly supplied by Mr. A. W. Franks, of the British museum.

"The leaf of the diptych of the consul Anastasius, now in the South Kensington museum, was exhibited to the Society of antiquaries, March 10, 1864, and described by me in the proceedings of the society (2nd series, vol. 2, p. 364) as the *diptychon Leodiense*. The other leaf was known to have been for some years in the museum at Berlin. It was therefore with considerable surprise that in the course of the summer of 1864, I found exhibited in the Musée de la Porte de Hal at Brussels a large ivory diptych purporting to be the *diptychon Leodiense*. Having been asked by a friend at Brussels my opinion on the recent acquisition of the Belgian government, I ventured to express some doubts in the presence of a gentleman who proved to be at the head of the commission, at whose recommendation the purchase had been made.

"I advised that the ivories should be taken out of the wooden frames into which they were fixed, and that the inscriptions known to have been on the genuine diptych should be sought for. On this being done, the falsity of the diptych became evident, the ivory at the back being fresh and not hollowed out for the reception of wax.

"An action was thereupon brought against the vendor, a dealer at Liége, and after some delay the amount paid by the Belgian government (£800) was recovered. The diptych had been copied from the engraving in Wilthem's work, and not from the original leaves, and this accounted for various errors in the details."

It seems strange that the Belgian authorities should have

bought at so great a sum ivories fixed in wooden frames, without some suspicion or at least without examination. The Liége dealer, however, is not the only one who has attempted impositions of this kind. About ten years ago there were four or five large ivories, of splendid appearance, in the hands of some London dealers. One was a triptych; another a diptych; a third a comb; and a fourth was a huge shrine with folding shutters and a tall richly decorated canopy, like the spire of a cathedral, covering a statuette of the Virgin and Child. (The statuette was probably genuine.) These ivories purported to be of the fourteenth century but were all new, and out of one shop or manufactory. The forgery in some respects was successful; but in every piece there was a distinct character and manner of execution—the same exactly in all of them—which proved their falseness. Several were traced back to a dealer at Amiens; and it is not now known what has become of any of them. The great shrine having been sold to an English collector for £500 was returned; and not very long ago was still to be seen in a shop window in the Strand and said to be, as if to make confusion worse confounded, an ivory carving of the *tenth* century. This, whilst it would show perhaps ignorance on the part of the possessor, would be an argument that he might be innocent of knowledge of the forgery.

The public institutions in England in which important ivories may be found are the British museum, the Ashmolean and Bodleian at Oxford, and the museum given to the town of Liverpool with noble liberality by Mr. Joseph Mayer. It is worthy of remark that scarcely any addition has been made to the ivories in the Ashmolean since the time when they were originally collected by Elias Ashmole nearly two hundred years ago; and they are of especial interest and value, though not many in number, because they can reasonably claim with scarcely an exception to be of English workmanship. A very large proportion of the other three great collections had also been gathered together before they be-



came the property of the nation. The Liverpool ivories were chiefly obtained from the representatives of the late Gabriel Fejérváry ; and, in like manner, the South Kensington museum—begun about the year 1853 and gradually enriched by the acquisition of some rare Spanish ivories and some of the best pieces from the Soltikoff collection, selected with excellent judgment by Mr. J. C. Robinson—has received from time to time during the last four or five years many large and important additions from the collection made by John Webb, Esq. More than two-thirds of the ivories in the British museum, and certainly a large number of the most valuable, had also been previously collected by a private person.

THE END.

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